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Number 78 Winter 1988-89

Symposium on Weber's
The Protestant Ethic

Richard van Dülmen, Guy Oakes, Paul Piccone

Special Section:
Recent Literature on Weber

David Gross, Russell A. Berman, Harry Liebersohn, Alan Sica, Guenther Roth, Thomas Burger, Moishe Gonzales

Social Construction of Universality and Particularity
Zygmunt Bauman

Israel and the Holocaust
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Back To Union Station
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Reviews:

Andrew Fraser: Reconstituting Enlightened Despotism
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Joseph W. Bendersky: Carl Schmitt as *Occasio*

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Introduction

"Interests (material and hypothetical), not ideas, directly dominate human action. However, very often the 'images of the world' created by 'ideas' have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been directed by the dynamic of interests." So wrote Max Weber in his introduction to "The Economic Ethics of World Religions." In the real world, action is very often sidetracked or comes to a halt: the trains stop running, as they have at Union Station in St. Louis, which is the subject of Jeanne Schuler's article: "Back to Union Station." When Weber arrived in St. Louis in 1904, having just completed the first draft of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Union Station was a bustling center of mid-west traffic. Now it has become a commercial center and tourist attraction. Not so coincidentally, like so much of Weberiana, *The Protestant Ethic* has been commercialized by sociologists, has become a tourist attraction of the mind. But here too, as with Union Station, the switch has not been pulled by any abstract ideas objectified through some higher transcendental calling (Calvinist or otherwise), in order to create a brave new bourgeois world. As Schuler shows, economic interests have simply overshadowed every other consideration. Worse yet, the plastic glitter that has replaced the trains in St. Louis, Washington and a growing number of other American cities has done so not only spatially but conceptually. Here, notwithstanding its sharpness, the critique fails as a possible switchman and capitulates to the irresistible logic of the given: it risks ending up an abstract negation which, unable to posit any better alternative than what it seeks to displace, reasserts the given as the alpha and omega of all possible discourse. Thus the call to open public spaces stutters away into silence looking for *security* — once the civil society of free-loaders, drug-dealers and homeless burst on the scene. And the political movements of the 60s, far from being the solution, often turn into part of the problem when their universalistic appeals to abstract ideals contribute precisely to that social disintegration they sought to reverse. Today, the original idealism of the counterculture has been displaced by the self-destructive hedonism of the drug culture, while the universalism of the civil rights movement has given way to the particularism and opportunism of affirmative action.

The positive side of this generalized process of social disintegration is an epiphenomenon of the ensuing breakdown of all traditional social identities.

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Concrete historical particularity as such is displaced by a new artificial particularity constituted by patterns of consumption. Along with the desirable, however, the undesirable also disappears. As Zygmunt Bauman shows in "Strangers: The Social Construction of Universality and Particularity," the gradual erosion of traditional particularity has made everyone a "stranger." But when communal familiarity gives way to universal strangeness, the category itself, whose meaning derived from an otherness that no longer exists, ceases to make sense. More concretely, in the case of Jews — prototypical strangers — this homogenization of all strangeness also means the obsolescence of *their own particular* strangeness, hence of anti-Semitism and, finally, of their very identity as Jews. Within such a context old ideologies collapse, removing the original *raison d'être* from their institutional objectifications which, in order to survive, are forced to invent new ones. The price paid in this transaction, however, is steep. As Mosche Zuckermann suggests in his discussion of the ideological function of Holocaust-discourse in Israel, the point is to provide legitimation to a state increasingly in need of it. Here he does not mince words, and boldly asks a forbidden question: Is the Israeli state any longer in the interest of Jews? The problem of remaining aware of the past without simultaneously allowing it to dominate and strangle the present is also the underlying theme of the recent *Historikerstreit* in West Germany. In his review of Charles Maier's book, *The Unmasterable Past*, Jack Zipes reconstructs this problem in terms of the manipulation of history to support fading identities not yet supplanted by new ones. It is still impossible in West Germany either to re-establish historical continuity with the past or to break with it. In this no-win situation Germans find it impossible to confront recent historiography objectively and dispassionately.

This predicament does not improve much when, instead of the immediate past, one goes further back and re-examines the contribution of intellectual giants of German sociology such as Weber. The recent publication of a surprising number of specialized monographs on the subject, some of which are reviewed in the "Special Section: Recent Weber Literature," testifies to the wisdom of the above-quoted passage: it is *interests*, not ideas, that dominate human action. Thus it is not very productive to focus primarily on Weber's ideas to explain this academic revival. Rather, it is advisable to interpret this revival in terms of academic interests: how this all feeds into the logic of careers in a profession rapidly losing prestige and, consequently, funding and power.

With the rapid decline of Marxism as the official "radical chic" subdiscipline in academia, there has been a need to find a substitute respectable enough to meet the new standards of "sober" post-68 scholarship, yet sufficiently interesting to provide minimal justification for such an investment of time and effort. This is why a book on Weber is rapidly becoming almost a rite of passage and a visa into the world of academic sociology. In the "Special Section: Recent Literature on Weber," the focus is on the context and kind of

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sociology he engendered (the reviews by David Gross and Russell A. Berman), the kind of person he was and social milieu to which he belonged (the reviews by Harry Liebersohn and Alan Sica), what Weber actually said and meant (the reviews by Thomas Burger and Moishe Gonzales), and what kind of politics he promoted and how it fared (Guenther Roth's review). The resulting collage helps understand not only Weber and his problematic, but also the present predicament and fate of sociology in general. The reviews on Carl Schmitt (by Joseph Bendersky) and Roberto Unger (by Andrew Fraser) take the discussion beyond Weber and bring it back to him with the critique of liberalism.

A more systematic discussion of Weber's theoretical legacy is undertaken in the "Symposium on Weber's *The Protestant Ethic*," which critically evaluates Luciano Pellicani's analysis of this seminal work in his article in *Telos* 75. By way of introduction, Richard van Dülmen traces the long history of the debate concerning this work and tries to assess the present status of the question. In a more partisan defense of the thesis advanced in *The Protestant Ethic*, Guy Oakes carefully reconstructs Weber's original position and argues for its continuing relevance. This is questioned by Paul Piccone's analysis of the politics of the Weber debate, both in terms of Pellicani's specific reading and Weber's overall project. Far from being a mere exercise in sociological archeology, this debate uncovers many of the fundamental problems confronting the social sciences today and their increasingly problematic political function. Thus this exchange does not present itself as yet another conclusion to a decades-old debate, but as the beginning of a reconsideration of a whole series of issues which, though generated by the failure of Weber's project, have never been satisfactorily confronted.

G.L. Ulmen

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Strangers: The Social Construction of Universality and Particularity

Zygmunt Bauman

Most of our contemporaries are strangers. Little do we know of their life, less still do we understand. We assume that, were we to communicate with them, we would need to overcome mutual misunderstandings — an obstacle arising from the unclarity, or perhaps even the impenetrability of signs that denote each side's intentions. We can imagine this kind of difficulty if we use a foreign language as a metaphor, or if we recall a visit to a land where a foreign language is spoken. The difficulty with reaching agreement as to the proper form of life, which provides the substance for the image of stranger, is patterned after the difficulty of understanding an unfamiliar language. As Wittgenstein suggested, to understand is to know how to go on. This is why hermeneutical problems, which arise when the meaning is not unreflectively evident and when this meaning has a "topical relevance" for one's conduct, are experienced as annoying. Unresolved hermeneutical problems mean uncertainty as to how the situation ought to be read and what response is likely to bring about desired results. At best, uncertainty is felt as discomforting; at worst, it carries a sense of danger.

Social organization can be interpreted as the sedimentation of a systematic effort to reduce the frequency with which hermeneutical problems are encountered and to mitigate the vexation generated by such problems. Probably the most common problem is the method of territorial and functional separation. Were this method applied consistently,

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hermeneutical problems would diminish as physical distance shrank and interaction expanded; the chance of misunderstanding always entailed by the phenomenon of strangeness would not materialize, or would cause but a marginal disturbance when it occurred. The designation of others as strangers involves ideally the "restriction of interaction to sectors of assumed common understanding and mutual interest."[1]

Territorial and functional separation works both outwardly and inwardly. Persons who need to cross into a territory where they are likely to be seen as strangers actively seek enclaves marked for the use of visitors and the services of functional mediators. Tourist countries, which expect a constant influx of large quantities of strangers, set aside such enclaves and train such mediators. This territorial and functional separation is both a reflection of existing hermeneutic problems and a powerful factor in their perpetuation and reproduction. With segregation closely guarded, there is little chance the probability of a misunderstanding (or at least the anticipation of such a misunderstanding) will diminish. Interpretative agreement is a function of an intense interweaving of biographies, which this segregation effectively prevents. Thus the phenomenon of strangeness can be seen as simultaneously the cause and the effect of boundary-drawing efforts. As such, it tends to perpetuate itself.

The phenomenon of *strangeness* encompasses a wide range of situations. One pole includes strangers who reside in *pratically* remote (i.e., rarely visited) lands. They are thereby limited in their role of setting limits to familiar territory (the *ubi leones* written down as danger warnings on the outer boundaries of the Roman maps). Exchange with such strangers is set aside from daily routine and normal interaction as a function of a special category of people and a special occasion for the rest. Both territorial and functional means of institutional separation easily protect strangeness — hence the daily irrelevance — of strangers. Thus it obliquely reinforces the secure hominess of the territory.[2]

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1. Frederick Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference* (Bergen: Universitet Ferlaget, 1969), p. 15.

2. Contrary to widespread opinion, the advent of television, this huge and easily accessible peephole through which the strange ways of the strangers may be routinely glimpsed, has neither eliminated the institutional separation nor diminished its impact. McLuhan's "global village" has failed to materialize. The frame of a cinema or TV screen staves off the danger of spillage more effectively still than tourist hotels and fenced-off camping sites; the one-sidedness of communication further entrenches the strangers on the screen as, essentially, *incommunicado*. The most recent invention of "thematic" shopping malls, with Carribean villages, Indian reservations and Polynesian shrines closely packed together under one roof, has perfected the old technique of institutional separation to a point reached in the past only by the zoo.

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The Social Structure of Strangeness

Territorial and functional separation do not work in the case of the stranger who, in Simmel's sense, is "the man who comes today and stays tomorrow."[3] In other words, it does not work with a person who refuses to go away and hence defies spatial or temporal segregation. The fact he has come at a point in time that can be determined, he did not belong "initially," "originally," "from the very start," "since time immemorial," makes his presence an event in history, rather than a fact of nature. His passage from the first to the second would infringe on an important boundary on the existential map; such a passage would amount to the admission nature is itself an event in history and, therefore, appeals to natural rights deserve no preferential treatment. Being an event in history, having a beginning, the presence of the stranger always carries the potential for an end. The stranger has the freedom to go. He may be also forced to go or, at least, forcing him to go may be contemplated without violating the order of things. However protracted, the stay of the stranger is temporary: another infringement on a division which ought to be kept intact and preserved in the name of a secure, orderly existence.

This is not, however, where the incongruity of Simmel's stranger ends. The stranger disturbs the resonance between physical and psychical distance. He is physically near while remaining spiritually remote. He brings into the inner circle the kind of difference and otherness anticipated and tolerated only at a distance. The stranger represents an incongruous and hence resented "synthesis of nearness and remoteness."[4] His presence is a challenge to the reliability of orthodox orientation points and the universal tools of order-making. His proximity (as all proximity, according to Levinas[5]) suggests a moral relation, while his remoteness (as all remoteness, according to Erasmus[6]) permits only a contractual one: another important opposition compromised.

The practical incongruity follows the conceptual. The stranger who refuses to go gradually transforms his temporary abode into a home territory, all the more so as his other, "original" home recedes in the past and perhaps vanishes altogether. However, he retains (if only in

3. Georg Simmel, "The Stranger" (1908), in: *On Individuality and Social Forms* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 143.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

5. See Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Phillippe Nemo*, trans. by Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1982), pp. 95-101.

6. See Charles I. Erasmus, *In Search of the Common Good* (New York: Free Press, 1974), pp. 74, 87.

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theory) his freedom to go, and so he able to view local conditions with an equanimity the native residents can hardly afford. Hence another incongruous synthesis obtains, this time between involvement and indifference, partisanship and neutrality, detachment and participation. The stranger's commitment cannot be trusted, since it comes complete with a safety valve for an easy escape most natives often envy yet seldom possess.

Simmel's stranger, the one who comes not in order to go, is therefore incurably afflicted with multiple incongruities. Indeed, he may serve as a crown example of Sartre's *le visquex* or Douglas' *the slimy* — an entity sitting astride an embattled barricade (or, rather, a substance spilled over the top of it making it slippery both ways), blurring a boundary line vital to the construction of a particular social order or a particular life-world. No classification deployed in the construction of order can fully overlap with an essentially non-discrete experience of reality. Thus enforcement of any classification means inevitably the production of anomalies (i.e., phenomena are perceived as "anomalous" only in so far as they span categories whose separation is the function of the order); "any given culture must confront events which seem to defy its assumptions. It cannot ignore the anomalies which its scheme produces, except at risk of forfeiting confidence."[7] In the case of the stranger, the reactive strategy amounts to an effort to break apart the many syntheses the stranger represents.

The first choice is, of course, a radical cutting-through of the tangle of incongruencies by forcing the stranger to leave; to re-establish original order by bringing together, so to speak, personal and spatial strangeness. This most consistent of measures is not, however, always feasible — the absence of the stranger's "natural abode" being an extreme case. The stranger who is not just out of place but, in addition, homeless in the absolute sense, may become a tempting object of genocide.[8] Short

7. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London: Routledge, 1966), p. 39. One can hypothesize that somewhere between the stable and unthreatened order and its total destruction or replacement lies an area in which "the slimy" presents the most horrifying challenge and arouses the most pugnacious reactions; within this area, the vehemence of response seems to be roughly proportional to that fall in self-assurance and self-confidence which usually accompanies the weakening grip of the *ancien regime*. Again, the hosts' reactions to the influx of strangers coming to stay indefinitely may be compiled in a standard catalogue of responses to "sliminess" as such. Most items in such a catalogue refer to natives' attempts to defuse the "slimy" by depriving it of its "sliminess." All such attempts follow the logical, yet implausible strategy of separating again what the anomaly, pregnant with semantic ambiguity, blends.

8. In Ozick's pungent summary, "[t]he German Final Solution was an aesthetic

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of such a radical solution, one may dump the anomaly into one of numerous variants of *Naartürmer* or *Naarshiffen*,[9] and thus achieve congruence between inherently incongruous "exterritorial territory" and equally incongruous "translocal locals." Tribal reserves, native homelands and ethnic ghettos are the most notorious of such variants.

If radical or nearly-radical solutions are either impossible or inconvenient, a cultural fence is available as a second alternative. If the stranger cannot be made non-existent, he is at least made untouchable. Social intercourse with the stranger is severely reduced, and whatever communication is permitted is surrounded with a cumbersome ritual whose main function is to set the stranger outside the realm of the ordinary and disarm him of any possible source of normative influence. "The stranger has his own strange ways, let him keep them but remember that they fit only him and do not suit us, normal people." Strict prohibitions of *connubium*, *commercium,* and commensality are the most common methods of cultural isolation and limitation of contact. Together they define the stranger as "the other" and protect the ambiguity of his status from polluting the clarity of native identity.

Keeping the stranger apart does not, however, suffice to neutralize his inherent and dangerous incongruity. He remains a permanent "slimy," always threatening to wash out the boundaries vital to native identity. The danger must be posted; the natives must be warned and kept on alert lest they succumb to the temptation of compromising the separate ways that make them what they are. This can be attained by discrediting the stranger; by representing the outward, visible and easy to spot traits of the stranger as signs of less evident, yet truly dangerous qualities. This is the social institution of stigma Goffman elaborated a couple of decades ago.

In its original meaning "stigma" stood for bodily signs signalling inferiority of character or moral wickedness. The concept can be applied more widely to all cases when an observable feature of a certain category of persons is first made salient by being brought into the focus of public attention, and then interpreted as a signifier of an *imputed* iniquity or moral turpitude. An otherwise innocuous trait becomes a blemish, a sign of affliction, a cause of shame. A person bearing this

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solution; it was a job of editing, it was the artist's finger removing a smudge, it simply annihilated what was considered not harmonious." See Cynthia Ozick, *Art and Ardour*, (New York: Dutton, 1984), p. 165.

9. Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization, A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (London: Tavitstock, 1967), pp. 7-13.

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trait is easily recognizable as less desirable, inferior, bad and dangerous. His partners are forewarned of the possible consequences of carefree interaction. They are also armed with information about the *virtual social identity* of the members of the stigmatized category — an identity difficult to be subsequently disproved, however hard the stigmatized try to demonstrate the *actual identity* as defined by themselves.[10]

Stigma seems to be a convenient weapon in defence against the unwelcome ambiguity of the Simmelian stranger. The essence of stigma is to emphasize a difference in principle beyond repair. Indeed, the outward signs of an allegedly morbid interior usually selected are those not likely to be easily hidden by human cosmetic skills. In the modern world, with its belief in the omnipotence of culture and education, constant exhortations to self-improvement and the axiom of individual responsibility for self-construction, stigma remains one of those few "natural" residues the re-designing and engineering zeal exempts and leaves in their reputedly virgin state. Stigma marks the limit of the transforming capacity of culture. The outward signs may be hidden, but cannot be eradicated. The bond between signs and inner truth may be denied, but cannot be broken. With such qualities, the institution of stigma is eminently fit to the task of immobilizing the stranger in his identity of "the other." Were the stranger merely a person as-yet-untrained in local habits and not properly adapted to native conditions, the practical threat of his "multiple incongruity" would leave the native defenseless. More dangerously still, the inherent brittleness of identity will be blatantly exposed. An identity anyone can acquire through diligence and effort is an identity which can be shed at will — a foundation much too weak to sustain the group's secure existence. The acceptance of the merely cultural essence of the stranger's idiosyncrasy means the renunciation by the group of its passport-and-visa issuing authority and of its right to control the border traffic. And an unguarded border is, for all practical purposes, a contradiction in terms. Stigma staves off all such dangers. It is a cultural product which proclaims a limit to the potency of culture. In stigma, culture draws a boundary to the territory it considers its task to cultivate, and circumscribes an area destined to lie fallow.

Since the signs of stigma essentially resist manipulation, a category may cease to be stigmatized only if the signifier of stigma is re-interpreted

10. Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (London: Penguin, 1968), p. 12.

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as innocuous or neutral, or completely denied semantic significance, and thus made socially invisible. In modern society there is a constant pressure to do exactly this. The pressure cannot be easily neutralized. It comes from attributes quite central and constitutive of modern society, like the principle of equality of opportunity, the freedom of self-constitution, responsibility of the individual for its own fate — and may not be effectively countermanded without contradiction and without generating new incongruities. After all, modernity is a rebellion against fate and ascription in the name of the omnipotence of design and achievement. Stigma cannot but be a thorn in its flesh; it restores dignity to fate and casts a shadow on the promise of limitless perfectibility. It is, therefore, at odds with everything modernity stands for and everything modern society must believe in to reproduce itself in the only shape it knows and is trained to cultivate. However, the principle of self-constitution, if pursued to its logical consequences, clashes with the requirement of collective identity which modern society must attempt to satisfy, even if it has failed to develop original, specifically modern means for the task. In fact, the question of collective identity reaches in modern conditions a gravity it never had before. Collective identities, which once upon a time were given "naturally" and matter-of-factly, are now, so to speak, artificially produced. This makes them more than ever precarious, an object of close attention of the designing-engineering-gardening modern powers.[11] There is, therefore, a genuine contradiction in the heart of modernity. Its presence precludes the possibility of satisfying both, equally pressing, needs at the same time. Beyond a certain point, the means deployed to meet one become damaging from the viewpoint of the other.

In modern society, stigma is located in the very center of this contradiction. It is, in an important sense, illegitimate, and in many cases leads a clandestine life. At the same time, it is practically indispensable. There is a paradoxical symmetry between the situation of the stigma and of the categories it stigmatizes. Both live under attack; both must hide their true identity and seek deceitful legitimations. Both work under conditions which make their actions self-defeating or at least sharply limit their effectiveness.

Liberalism, arguably the most authentically modern of policies, suffers from similar tensions reflecting one of the central contradictions of

11. More on this topic in Zygmunt Bauman, *Legislators and Interpreters* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1987).

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modernity. On the face of it, the liberal message sounds a death knell to stigma, as its saps the strongest of its foundations: the ascriptive nature of inferiority. Liberalism extends a standing invitation to all to take their fate in their own hands and make it as good as they can. It proclaims a universal right to claim and attain the highest, most worthy and hence most coveted values. It offers not just hope but the clear recipe of its realization: the best values, in the charmingly circular formulation of J. S. Mill, are those recognized and practiced by the best people.

On closer scrutiny, however, liberalism's offer reveals an inner contradiction, which renders the offer as misleading (and in the end frustrating) as it is tempting. But it is a contradiction liberalism can ill afford to abandon. To be effective as legitimation, liberalism must insist the values possessed by the "best people" are indeed universally available — their possession is evidence of the superiority of those who possess them. In the unlikely case, however, that the offer is taken up on a massive scale, the very superiority it was meant to prove will have been washed away. One may say liberalism can make its offer without fear only because a great number of successful applicants is most unlikely and thus the offer's deception is unlikely to be exposed. To look at it from the other side, liberalism may preach this offer so confidently only because it believes that taking it up is much too tall an order for most of the "less than best" people. The most important function this offer fulfills is to make it possible to "blame the victim": if you find yourself at the bottom, you have no one but yourself to blame. And if you blame yourself, the odds are you'll stay clear of mischief, while at the same time adding to the glory of the dominant values which, so you believe, remain omnipotent and elusive. And if you refuse to admit your guilt or ineptitude, reverting to stigma would be a most sensible and hence most probable response. Paradoxically as it may seem, liberalism may use the declaration of war on stigma as a legitimizing device only if it expects the war not to be fought to the bitter end; and, if fought, never to be won.

In no other field is the inner contradiction of the "liberal solution" more visible than in the treatment of ethnic, religious, or — more generally, cultural strangers. Determinants of "strangeness" are in these cases eminently pliable; man-made, they can be in principle man-unmade. They can be also un-made (by definition of the "merely cultural," as distinct from economic, political, or indeed *social*) with the least expenditure of such resources which may be scarce or unavailable for reasons of someone else's monopoly. The un-making calls only

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for a change in orientation, a shift in communal commitment, an honest effort at self-cultivation and self-refinement, or religious conversion — all things evidently within the individual's power. This is why the field under discussion provides the most obvious testing ground for the liberal program, and the site where this program (though not necessarily the intention which gave it birth) most commonly meets its defeat. Ethnic-religious-cultural strangers do vest their hopes of emancipation with the liberal vision of the benefits which come with self-improvement and self-transformation. All too often, they go out of their way to suppress everything that makes them distinct from the "best people" and hope a devoted emulation of the superior ways will render them indistinguishable from the hosts. The harder they try, however, the more the finishing line seems to be receding. When finally it seems to be within their grasp, a dagger of racism appears from beneath the liberal cloak. The rules of the game are changed; or, rather, only now the earnestly "self-refining" strangers discover that what they mistook for a game of emancipation was in fact the game of domination.

Gilman has written about the "conservative curse" which hangs over the liberal project: "The more you are like me, the more I know the true value of my power, which you wish to share, and the more I am aware that you are but a shoddy counterfeit, an outsider."[12] And Dench has the following advice for strangers about to fall into the trap of the liberal promise: "By all means declare a belief in future justice and equality. This is part of the role. But do not expect it to materialize."[13] The meaning of the liberal offer is the affirmation of the superiority of that site in society from which the offer has been made. To take the offer at its face value (and worse stlll, to act on it) means to reinforce that meaning.

To define the problem of the "domestication" of the stranger as a question concerning the decency and industry of the stranger's effort at assimilation-through-acculturation means to take the inferiority, undesirability or out-of-placeness of the strangers's form of life as an axiom. Therefore, the stranger is guilty and it is up to him to prove himself innocent. His guilt is beyond dispute; it is only the irreversible removal of such attributes which constitute guilt that remains to be proven. The stranger must demonstrate the absence of old abomination. He must, magically, force it in retrospect never to exist *in the past*.

12. Sander L. Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred: Antisemitism and the Hidden Language of the Jews* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press,1986), p. 2.

13. Geoff Dench, *Minorities in the Open Society: Prisoners of Ambivalence* (London: Routledge, 1986), p. 259.

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Displaying the presence of new rectitude is not enough. The stranger cannot cease to be a stranger. He can only become a *former stranger*; a person constantly under pressure to be someone other than he is, told to be ashamed of his guilt of not being what he ought to be.

To prove an absence is an endemically inconclusive task (to unmake the past is downright impossible). The effort is unlikely ever to end. Even less likely is the attainment of a state where no suspicion can be raised that the rehabilitation, however spectacular, is still incomplete, superficial, or a sham. After all, what the "cultural strangers" are called to attain through self-refinement is ultimately the elimination of their origin (even the origin of their distant ancestors). This is the ultimate limit of domestication-through-acculturation, but not its only difficulty. Acquisition of native culture is a thoroughly *individual* affair, while the production of "cultural strangeness" is always *aimed at a collective*.[14]

From the perspective of a native majority, "all strangers are the same." As Simmel observed, in societies where taxes for the natives were differentiated according to wealth and status, the "Jew tax" was the same for every member of the community. The individuality of the stranger is dissolved in the category; it is the category, not its individual members, which is set and seen as the genuine, supra-personal carrier of cultural difference. The individual stranger is cast metonymically as a microcosm of the category at large. He carries, so to speak, his category on his shoulders. He is unlikely to shed this burden as long as the category itself remains alive. Indeed, the person attempting to escape the stigma of the stranger alone and by individual effort soon finds himself caught in a double bind. "If the most able and successful members of the minority are morally tied to the least successful, participation in competitive areas of social life becomes for them something of a three-legged race."[15] If they wash their hands and refuse all track with "cultural inferiors," socially defined as their brethren, they invite accusations of neglect of duty and, indeed, of complicity in the perpetuation of the collective guilt. If they devote their efforts to the arduous job of lifting their brethren from their misery and act as the agents of their collective elevation, this is immediately taken as proof (if one was needed) of their continuous membership in the selfsame category of strangers from which they tried to escape. The continuing existence of the category of strangers is used as an argument against the

14. See Zygmunt Bauman "Exit Visas and Entry Tickets: Paradoxes of Jewish Assimilation," in *Telos* 77 (Fall 1988), pp. 45-77.

15. Dench, *op.cit.*, p. 127.

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authenticity of individual conversion. But so is any individual attempt to assist the emancipation of the category as a whole. If you do something, you lose. If you do nothing, they win.

As has been frequently observed, once caught in this quandary individual victims of the liberal temptation tend to develop self-hatred — the phenomenon of the *inner demons of assimilation*. The torment caused by the inner demons often turns into aggression against the category of origin, which serves as their prototype and is perceived as their embodiment. But it also leads to the queasy aversion to one's own self, as if incurably infested with a bacillus of a contagious and shameful disease.

The notorious restlessness of the stranger, construed by native opinion as evidence of an erratic, neurotic personality, is socially produced. It may serve as a textbook case of the self-fulfilling prophecy. It is not the outcome of cultural difference, but an affliction caused by an attempt to efface it: an endemic malady of cultural assimilation. One may conclude that defining the strangeness as a cultural phenomenon is the starting point of a process which leads relentlessly to the "revelation" that strangeness has foundations much more solid and much less manipulable than "merely cultural," transitory and man-made differences in life-style and beliefs. The more successful the practice of cultural assimilation, the quicker this "truth" will be "discovered." The growing contradictoriness and incongruity (and hence strangeness) of the culturally assimilating stranger is precisely the artifact of his assimilation. The inherent *impossibility* of implementing the "self-refinement" program is then construed as the stranger's inherent *inability* or *uwillingness* to self-refine: evidence of a tribal conspiracy or an ineradicable genetic flaw. There is no mystery, nor is there a logical inconsistency, in the natural destiny of race coming into favor in the wake of the eye-opening cultural successes of liberalism.

The Self-Constitution of the Stranger

Even if the phenomenon of strangeness is socially structured, the assumption of the status of "stranger" carries attributes which have to be constructed, sustained and deployed in the psychical process of self-constitution. Like all other roles, this one needs learning, the acquisition of knowledge and practical skills.

Being a stranger means, first and foremost, sundering the primeval union between the self and the world, and hence bringing both into focus. Both the self and the world become clearly visible; both are articulated as problems; both call for constant examination and both

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need, in the end, to be "operated on," "handled," *managed*. In all these respects the stranger's stance differs drastically from the native way of life, with far-reaching consequences.

The concept of *clean slate*, once popular among educators and cultural missionaries, must have been conceived by the extrapolation of the stranger's experience. Most certainly, it poorly reflects the condition of the "native" born into the community and growing inside it without much challenge from outside. His is the state of "being situated" or "tuned" (Heidegger), which can feed nothing but the *relativ-natürliche Weltanschauug* (Max Scheler): i.e., the viewing of conditions otherwise circumscribed, confined to this place here and now, as "natural" and thus beyond discussion. Being a native member of any community of meanings is tantamount to being supplied with guaranteed, "objective" criteria of relevance, and a "graduated knowledge" (Alfred Schutz) which ranges from shallow to dense, together with the relevance of its objects. But it is also fraught with deep holes of ignorance, often only thinly covered with the lids of "taken for granteds."[16] Whether such knowledge may seem incoherent and inconsistent to a logician, or indeed to any *stranger* not "tuned in"' or tuned imperfectly, is neither here nor there. The only thing which truly counts is that it "takes on for the members of the in-group the appearance of a *sufficient* coherence, clarity and consistency to give anybody a reasonable chance of understanding and of being understood." It is thanks to this limited, yet crucial, sufficiency that "(f)or those who have grown up within the cultural pattern, not only the recipes and their possible efficiency but also the typical and anonymous attitudes required by them are an unquestioned 'matter of course' which gives them both security and assurance."[17] Security and assurance is something one can ill afford to surrender lightly. To the extent to which they depend on the "matter of fact" posture, one would expect the in-group members to defend jealously the non-negotiable, immutable, indeed absolute character of their world-view constructed from shared, graduated knowledge.

The existential situation of the stranger is radically different. He is denied the luxury of smugness or self-oblivion. His is an opaque, not a transparent existence. The stranger is his own problem. His identity has been de-legitimated; its determining, "tuning" power has been declared at best demeaning and, at worst, criminal. The peculiarity of the

16. Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers*, vol. 1 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhof, 1967), pp. 9-12.

17. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 95, 102.

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stranger's situation *vis-á-vis* the natives is not, however, confined to the obvious condition of not being "tuned" the right way and the resulting absence of relevant knowledge and skills. Not being so confined, it cannot be removed simply by learning and self-training. The difference, in fact, reaches much deeper: the knowledge which serves so adequately the life functions of the natives may well prove useless to the strangers even if conscientiously absorbed and assimilated. Indeed, it is not the failure to acquire native knowledge that constitutes the outsider as a stranger; it is the existential constitution of the stranger which makes the native knowledge unassimilable.[18]

The first reason which renders the self-annihilation of strangeness impossible is exactly the "naturalness" of the native state. One is either "situated" or not, either "tuned" or not. One cannot "situate oneself" or "tune oneself in." Or, rather, the very fact that "situating" and "tuning" are performed consciously and deliberately deprives them of exactly this "naturalness" which makes them what they are and effective as they are. The idea of "self-tuning" is, for all practical purposes, an oxymoron. The condition of "being situated" or "tuned" persists only as long as it is not brought into focus and does not become an object of manipulation. Yet this is precisely what the stranger can never avoid. He is a newcomer to the group in a literal sense, and what seems obvious to the natives looks hardly obvious to him. What the natives do not give any thought to is for him a target of intense reflection; or, the lifting of the "graduated knowledge" from the grey area of "evidence" to the level of self-awareness is performed for the stranger by the native group itself. This happens as the native group questions his natural right to partake of what the in-group members are, i.e., simply and unproblematically "in." Because of his ignorance, or because of the knowledge forced upon him, the stranger cannot but call into question most of the things the native group considers, or unthinkingly treats as, unquestionable. He solidifies and renders tangible the mode of life effective only in so far as it stays transparent, invisible, uncodified.

Another reason reaches deeper still. The stranger cannot just adopt

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18. The very constitution of the host population as "the natives" — one conceivable only in as far as there is a vantage point which is *not native* — already reveals the corroding, relativizing gaze of the stranger. Obliquely, it reinforces the strangeness of the latter. The stranger confirms the dominant definition of himself by the sheer acceptance of the other model as "native" and, consequently, as a model wielding authority to define the rules of the behavioral game and the meaning of properly human existence.

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the native culture as it stands without first attempting to revise some of its precepts — perhaps even such precepts crucial for the native state of security and self-assurance — and this for the simple reason that the native culture defines him and sets him apart as an alien and contains no means to accomodate him as a native. The stranger is assigned no status "inside" the culture he may wish to make his own. His entry will, therefore, signify a violation of that culture. Indeed, the very act of entering will constitute such a violation. By the act of his entry, real or intended, the natives' life-world that used to be a shelter is turned into a contested, insecure and problematic ground. By the same token, the very good will of the stranger turns against him. His effort to assimilate sets him further apart, bringing more than ever his strangeness into relief.

One cannot knock on a door unless one is outside; and it is the act of knocking on the door which alerts the residents to the fact that one is indeed outside. "Being outside" casts the stranger in the position of *objectivity*: an outside, detached and autonomous vantagepoint from which the insiders may be looked upon, scrutinized and censored. The very awareness of such an outside viewpoint (epitomized by the stranger's status) makes the natives feel uncomfortable, insecure in their home ways and truths. Besides, entry is always a passage, a changing of statuses; and this transformation more than anything else puts the "yesterday stranger/prospective native" in conflict with the world he wishes to enter — a world which draws its confidence (and its attraction for the stranger in the first place) from the assumption that no one moves and no one finds himself ever outside. The fact of entry brands the ostensibly "former" stranger forever — as a *changeling*, a person who can pick and choose, who has the freedom natives as such do not possess, whose status can never have the same degree of finality and irreversibility as the natives. The loyalty simply taken for granted in the case of natives (and then understood not as an act of loyalty, but as commonality of fate), calls for a suspicious and vigilant scrutiny in the case of yesterday's stranger; and it will be forever so, since his commitment has been compromised from the start by being freely chosen. Whatever has been chosen may be rejected. The stranger's loyalty will always remain doubtful. The very zeal he identifies with the new home casts him apart. His insistence on being at home is taken as an admission of guilt.

The *objectivity* of the stranger is the most serious of charges the native community holds against him. Indeed, it is through this grievance that

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the native form of life may best sustain and reproduce its *naturalness*, its inwardness, its self-centrism — all the most solid pillars of its identity. In the native world-view, the essence of strangeness is homelessness. The stranger is not simply a new-comer, a person temporarily out of place. He is an eternal wanderer, homeless always and everywhere, without hope of ever "arriving." The "objectivity" (read: cosmopolitanism, non-patriotism, non-commitment) of his view consists precisely in his inability to make a distinction between the stations of his unstoppable pilgrimage: as far as he is concerned, all of them are just sites, confined in space, bound to become the past in the future. Passed by, and sooner or later left behind, they all look alike: they are all identical in their *negativity* as none of them is a home.

The natives may view the freedom they impute to the stranger with genuine horror, with a jaundiced eye, or (most commonly) with a mixture of both. To the stranger himself, however, freedom appears first of all as acute uncertainty. Unmitigated by at least a part-time availability of safe harbor, it tends to be experienced as a curse rather than a blessing. Freedom in the undiluted state is lived as loneliness. As a chronic condition it is virtually unbearable. In the extreme case it verges on madness. But even in mild versions it tends to be medicalized as a mental problem.[19] In each case, it is a state in which its occupier would not wish to remain permanently — not by his own will, anyway.

It is mainly for this reason that the liberal offer is such an alluring proposition for the stranger. It promises what the stranger misses most: an unambiguous placement, safe harbor, home. The missing magnifies the attractions of what is missed. One would therefore expect from the stranger a degree of commitment and emotional identification seldom found among natives. One would also expect a tendency to proclaim the aspired-to identity loudly and publicly. One would anticipate the praise of the symbols and the articles of faith of the aspired-to community to be lavish and flowery. All this follows naturally from a need to convince the audience of having *acquired* a quality other people — simultaneously viewers and actors — *possess* by right. But to those other people all this may seem excessive, "in bad taste," ludicrous

19. See, e.g., Gilman's penetrating study of the history of *neurasthenia* — a psychiatric concept which in the late 19th century integrated into one disease-unit the heightened restlessness, frantic self-criticism and obsession with success and social acceptance, observed or anticipated among various categories of people poorly defined in terms of the accepted social categories or weakly anchored in the existing social divisions. Sander L. Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 129-30, 162, 214-15.

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or duplicitous. In each case, what they see will tend to disprove the very point the stranger zealously tries to prove.

Like the liberal offer, the strategy that follows it has its limits. More often than not, it is self-defeating. If anything, it renders the strangeness of the stranger yet more obtrusive and vexing. Unfailingly, it reveals this strangeness as irredeemable — the quality the liberal offer attempted to hide. The stranger had been promised that full "domestication" would follow cultural reform; that refinement of manners, containment of passion, correct and etiquette-conscious public demeanour, careful avoidance of everything vulgar would suffice as the membership ticket to the exclusive club of the native trend-setters. The bluff of this promise is called the moment it has been taken seriously and matched with a behavior it ostensibly demanded. The real obstacles guarding entry are now revealed. They are economic, political, and above all social; and none of them is likely to be as malleable or as amenable to subjective intention as the "merely cultural" obstacles pretended to be. It becomes apparent that social divisions are neither caused nor sustained by differences in the degree of civility and cultural polish. The etiquette consists precisely in the tacit acceptance, by those who gain and those who lose alike, of the prohibition to reveal the true grounds of distinction and privilege. At the same time, when the grounds of inequality are exposed as tough and inflexible, their favorite defenses are exposed as sham. No wonder that acting on the liberal offer tends to trigger off defensive reactions of the native community, ranging all the way from the re-introduction of ascriptive criteria of difference (albeit in a modern, "rational," racist garb), through the medicalization of otherness up to the annihilation of obstreperous otherness through the eviction or destruction of the stranger. If recourse to racism seems the natural way of salvaging the end of liberalism in the wake of the bankruptcy of its ostensible means, so the retreat into "strangedom" as a substitute home of rootedness and confidence seems an equally natural way of salvaging the purpose of assimilation once the means suggested by the liberal program have proved ineffective.

Hardly ever was a program of such a retreat so blatantly spelled out as in the work of the Russian-Jewish philosopher Lev Shestov (Schwartzmann), who in his later life was a professor at Sorbonne and one of the pillars of religious existentialism. Branded with the stigma of the despised and resented minority, he excelled in the very activity in which the despising and resenting majority prided itself as the sign of its superiority

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and excellence. Having passed with flying colors all entrance examinations, yet refused entry to the temple of wisdom which defined itself as absolute, universal and hence alien to all parochial difference, Shestov[20] responded with a frontal assault against what he set about to prove was an incurable *parochiality* of the very search for the absolute in general, and the *absolutely superior values* in particular. The philosophers' search for the ultimate system, for the complete order, for the extirpation of everything unknown and unruly, stems from the dream of having a firm soil and a secure home, and leads to closing down the obstinately infinite human potential. Such search for the universal cannot but degenerate into a ruthless clamp-down on human possibilities. "The solid ground sooner or later escapes from beneath man's feet, yet man continues to live without ground or with but a shaky ground under his feet, and then he stops counting the axioms as truths and instead calls them lies." The bitter experience of the stranger chased away from the door on which he knocked is thinly veiled in Shestov's own philosophical program: "The settled man says: 'How can one live without certainty about the day to come, how can one sleep without a roof over his head!' But an accident threw him out of his home forever, and he spends his nights in the woods. He cannot sleep: he is afraid of wild animals, of his own brother the vagabond. In the end, however, he entrusts his life to contingency, starts living the vagabond's life and even, perhaps, sleeps quietly at night." The task of philosophy, in sharp contrast to an entire philosophical tradition, is "to teach men to live in uncertainty"; "not to calm down, but to disturb." "Everywhere and with every step, on each or without any occasion, with or without reason, it is necessary to ridicule the most firmly accepted judgments and to state paradoxes. And then — one will see what happens."

In an early display of the "black is beautiful" posture, Shestov does not deny the valor of all those things dominant thought made into symbols of superiority. Philosophical orthodoxy stands accused of failing to deliver on its promise, of scoring miserably by its own standards. The promise and the standards are not questioned. On the contrary, Shestov insists that only his way of doing philosophy may do justice to both. Truth found inside a tightly sealed home is hardly useful outside; judgment made inside a room which for fear of draft is never aired, is blown away with the first gust of wind. The universality of truth and judgment born in confinement is but a cover for that constraint which

20. Lev Shestov, *Apotheosts of Rootlessness: An Essay in non-Dogmatic Thought* [in Russian], (Paris: YMCA Press, 1971), pp. 27, 32, 41, 49.

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feeds on the lust for domination and fear of the open space. A non-counterfeit universality may be born only out of homelessness. "As long as the truth is sought by the settled men — the apple of the Tree of Knowledge won't be eaten. The task can be performed only by homeless adventurers, by natural nomads . . ." The table has been turned. It is now the stranger who can find the truth the natives are vainly looking for. Far from being a mark of shame, the stranger's incurable foreignness is now a sign of distinction. The power of the homeowners is but a sham. The powerlessness of the homeless is but an illusion.

After Shestov, few new ideas may be gleaned from Mannheim's accolade of the *freischwebende Intelligenz*. Like in Shestov, the lack of social acceptance turns into a condition of undistorted communication — the outcast becomes a hero, the incongruous is revealed as objectivity. In Natanson's apt commentary, the advantage of Mannheim's intrepid truth-trapper is his "nomadic existence": "Bound by no formal commitments, he can move lightly through traditional formulations of social causation, control, and prediction." It is thanks to his perpetual and irreparable homelessness that Mannheim's "free-floating intellectual" becomes an "unmasker, penetrator of lies and ideologies, relativizer and devaluator of immanent thought, disintegrator of *Weltanschauungen*."[21] Indeed, he is an awesome corrosive force: a creator who draws his strength from his power of destruction. If reality is so many fenced-off and tightly guarded private plots, claims to truth remain but excuses for exclusion and eviction orders. One needs to break the fences first. The philosophers of the Jewish exile, after all, taught for centuries that the destruction must precede the advent of the Messiah; that redemption "cannot be realized without dread and ruin;"[22] and that this liberating destruction and the construction which will come in its wake is the meaning and the mission of exile, the unique chance and the purpose of homelessness. It is by their works that exile "healed the sickness of the world and reunited the scattered fragments. In fact, he alone would bring about this unification."[23]

Point by point, Mannheim disavows every single property of the "settled" from which they have drawn their pride, contentment and

21. Maurice Natanson, *Literature, Philosophy and the Social Sciences* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhof, 1962), p. 170.

22. Gershom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1971), p. 13.

23. Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi, The MysticaI Messiah* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), pp. 44-45.

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sense of security. Thus any well-integrated group is self-centered and hence selectively blind: "not every possible aspect of the world comes within the purview of the members of the group, but only those out of which difficulties and problems for the group arise." The solidity of roots is a recipe for parochial narrow-mindedness: "It is clearly impossible to obtain an inclusive insight into problems if the observer or thinker is confined to a given place in society." The distrust with which the group treats the "unfit" testifies to the group's own disabilities, rather than to the sins of the stranger. It is the outsiders' ability "to attach themselves to classes to which they originally did not belong," the fact that they "could adapt themselves to any viewpoint . . . because they and they alone were in position to choose their affiliation" that the well-settled groups cannot stomach. "Should the capacity to acquire a broader point of view be considered merely as a liability? Does it not rather present a mission?"[24]

The modern intellectual is a perpetual wanderer and universal stranger. No one truly likes him for this very reason; in every place, he is out of place. The continual rebuffs received everywhere and from everybody need not, however, result solely in the fanaticism of desperation. Rejection may as well open the eyes of the rejected to the meaning and value of the very position (or, rather, the "un-position") which has been the source of suffering. Rejection means, after all, freedom from obligations. Eviction means group loyalties need not constrain vision anymore; and thus "the narrowness and the limitations which restrict one point of view" may be "corrected by clashing with the opposite points of view." Exile is a blessing: the outcasts have been banished to the only site "from which a total perspective would be possible." They are now ripe for the role of decision-makers (or, more precisely, *good decision-makers*), as "[t]he formation of a decision is truly possible only under conditions of freedom based on the possibility of choice which continues to exist even after the decision has been made."[25]

While making a bid for the unique and superior status of the modern intellectual, Mannheim draws on the popular fear of the awesome power residing in the no-man's land outside the safe and habitual family or community plots. He embraces the finality of the native verdict, the perpetuity of exile. He also accepts the native suspicion that the stranger will never become like the native and will never see the world

24. Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (London: Routledge, 1968), pp. 26, 72, 141, 144.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 72, 143.

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through native eyes. Finally, he agrees with the worst of the native's suspicions: that estrangement breeds enmity to all local values. But he reforges the stigma of shame and the legal justification of the eviction order into a militant, defiant bid to superiority. To paraphrase Goffman, "instead of leaning on his crutch, he gets to play golf with it."

Only on the universal foundations he proclaims on behalf of the intellectual stranger may truth be built; and universality, as any native would accept, arises out of estrangement. The standpoint of the exile is the only cognitive determinant of universally-binding truth. Well-entrenched and self-centered groups inflate their narrow opinions to ostensibly universal proportions with the help of thought-constraints and the banishment of dissenters. By so doing, they prevent themselves from finding what they sought, and on the way discredit the very purpose of their search. The banished must protect the supreme value of universal truth from all further harm. They will do what those who exiled them failed to achieve. They will prove against all odds (and particularly against the dominant opinion) they are the staunchest, most loyal and most reliable defenders and promoters of the dominant values. This they can do as long as they refuse to efface their difference and insist on *remaining strangers*. It is through their estrangement they serve the values the group needs and wants to possess. The liberal program may well have failed to secure unification, but it was a false unification it offered in the first place. The real one will be attained precisely by those whom liberalism failed.

The process of self-construction sets the stranger ever further apart from the native group with which he still wants to ingratiate himself now as much as at the initial period of the assimilatory dream. The stranger offers a unique blend of universalist program and relativist practice. In order to secure true universality of the form of life — a purpose he shares with the native group (with *any native group*) — he must expose as false, and thus undermine, the security of values the native group (*any native group*) has grown to consider absolute. The stranger aims at the effacement of all divisions which stand in the way of uniform, essential humanity. This is the last hope he entertains to efface his own outsidedness. To the native group, however, his thrust for universality means more than anything else a confrontation with the decomposing, corrosive power of relativism.

Excursus: Franz Kafka, or the Rootlessness of Universality

The Jews have been Europe's prototypical strangers. In the continent

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of nations and nationalism, they were the only reminder of the relativity of nationhood and of the outer limits of nationalism. They were the very danger against which nations had to constitute themselves. They were the ultimate incongruity: a *non-national nation*. Their strangeness was not confined to any particular place; they were *universal strangers*. They were not visitors from another country, for there was no such "another country" — indeed, no country where they could claim not to be visitors or strangers. Jews were the very embodiment of strangeness, the very essence of homelessness and the absence of roots — an unexorcisable spectre of conventionality in the house of the absolute, of nomadic past in the era of settlement.

As the universal and hence most radical of strangers, European Jews fathomed the full depth of the stranger's experience. The universality of their strangeness endowed their particular experience with universal value. It is not that Jews embraced universality more avidly and with more abandon than anyone else. It was, rather, that their experience, through its unique features, articulated the very pattern of universality. Strangers of all walks of life could look at this experience as a mirror and see the blurred and vaguely conveyed details of their own likeness. It was Kafka's painfully lived, tormented Jewishness which permitted Camus and Sartre to glean from his work a parable of the universal predicament of the modern man. It allowed Camus to read Kafka as an insight into the incurable absurdity of modern life, into "the strangeness of human life"[26]; it allowed Sartre to find in Kafka the very definition of the stranger: "The stranger is a man confronting the world . . . The stranger is also man among other men . . . It is ultimately me in relation to myself."[27]

Like his nameless heroes, Kafka experienced guilt without crime, along with its consequence: condemnation without judgment. He lived in a "world in which it is a crime to be accused," in which the paramount skill for all those who did not want to be convicted of the crime was "to avoid the accusation."[28] However, this was the very skill impossible to obtain. There was no escape from the world where it was a crime merely to be accused. One carried that world with oneself wherever one went. "My imperfection is . . . not congenital, not earned" — confides Kafka in his diary.[29] It is neither natural nor man-made; neither

26. Pierre-George Castex, *Albert Camus et L'étranger* (Paris: José Cortez, 1986), p. 56.
27. Brian T. Fitch, *L'étranger d'Albert Camus* (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1972), p. 94.
28. Adrian Jaffe, *The Process of Kafka's Trial* (London: State University Press, 1967), p. 29.
29. *The Diaries of Franz Kafka 1910-23*, ed. by Max Brod (London: Penguin, 1964), pp. 18-19.

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fate nor deed. It is as incongruous as the position of the stranger among the natives, as impossible to fight as the other incongruity. Indeed, where would one find the home of the imperfection? "The reproaches lie around inside me." "I myself," as it were, "am perhaps the best aid of my assailants. For I underestimate myself, and that in itself means an overestimation of others" — the outside is inside, the two intertwine, interpenetrate, merge.

One of Kafka's most quoted self-diagnoses is the verdict he pronounced in a letter to Max Brod on the generation of Germanized (or were they just Germanizing?) Jews to which he belonged: " '[T]heir hind legs were still mired in their fathers' Jewishness and their thrashing forelegs found no new ground. The ensuing despair became their inspiration." Reality was an exact opposite of the liberalist utopia and the proven utter irrelevance of the main strategic principle of the assimilatory drive ("Be a Jew at home, a man in the street"). In Robert's pungent summary, "at home the young Jews of Prague lived, thought, and wrote like Germans apparently resembling other Germans, but outside of their neighbourhoods no one was deceived, the 'others' recognized them instantly by their faces, their manners, their accent. They were beyond a doubt assimilated, but only within the restricted area of their borrowed Germanism; or better still, they were 'assimilated' with their own uprootedness."[30] The most perceptive among the members of that generation, Kafka understood what the others barely, and only grudgingly, noticed: that he, like them, "was Jewish even in the way of not being Jewish."[31] Assimilation spawned the reality to which one strived to assimilate; the only reality to which one could hope to assimilate. Assimilation fed on itself and came to be its own sole purpose. It led away from the world left behind, but not closer to the world ahead.

By the dawn of the current century, when the self-defeating tendency of assimilation became ever more strongly felt,[32] the *Ostjuden* were gradually lifted from their recent unenviable role of the *inner demons of "Western" assimilation*[33] in which they kept reminding their civilized Western cousins there was little hope of ever consigning the past to

30. Martha Robert, *Franz Kafka's Loneliness*, trans. by Ralph Mannheim (London: Faber & Faber, 1982), p. 35.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

32. Gilman, *Difference and Pathology*, *op. cit.*, p. 174: "The value system they borrowed not only was never theirs in its entirety, but always contained elements inimical to them. The German always saw their adoption of it as merely a mask behind which glowered the unregenerate Jew. Sadly, for the German Jew the mask was the only reality."

33. Bauman, "Exit Visas and Entry Tickets," *op. cit.*

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oblivion. Somewhat unpredictably, the *Ostjuden* were promoted to a new role of "fulsome persons," which embodied everything the Western Jews most badly missed and belatedly regretted abandoning. "The Eastern Jews are a people with a strong sense of life and joy in it" — Nathan Birnbaum waxed wistfully in 1912. Martin Buber did more than anyone else to substitute the myth of the Eastern Jew as the symbol of cultural wholesomeness and health for the old myth of the *Ostjude* as the relic of the pre-cultural savagery which formalized Protestant ethics in alliance with the Enlightenment cult of civility set about to extirpate. At the same time, he inadvertently disclosed the sham of what had been trumpeted as a sudden reversal of the *Ostjude* fortune and the *Westjude* policy.[34] Hardly ever did the Jews borrow a majoritarian ideology which contained more "elements inimical to them . . ."

Kafka's own brief, yet intense and stormy encounter with the *Ostjuden* in the shape of a Mr. Löwy, Mrs. Tschissik and other actors of a Yiddish travelling theater constituted arguably the most dramatic single event in his life. For the first time, he saw "people who are Jews in an especially pure form because they live only in the religion, but live in it without effort, understanding, or distress."[35] These words in which love, admiration and envy are recorded, express also the sad wisdom of a hopeless reality. Those pure Jews were pure only because they *did not understand* their purity. It was ignorance which made them so complete and perfect, so carelessly happy. They did not know what Kafka did and what he could not unlearn. Their purity, and any of those traits which made them so alluring, were not for him. There was no way back into the past; or, rather, there was no past in Kafka to which he could return. In the course of his daily conversations with his new friends and mentors, it occurred to him that for the Jews the word *Mutter* is not just the name for mother but a *German* name for mother, which "makes her a little comic." For a Jew, *Mutter* "unconsciously

34. As George L. Mosse convincingly argues, the discovery of a "new and improved" version of the *Ostjude* was another link in a long chain of borrowings from the dominant culture, always prompted (overtly or subconsiously) by the urge "not to differ," "be like them," and thus "be admitted." Mosse found a truly striking similarity between Buber's sentimental account of the East-European ghetto and the ideology of Paul de Lagarde and other spokesmen for the budding German *Volksgemeinschaft*. Buber's favorite words were *Blut, Boden, Volkstum, Gemeinshaft, Wurzelhaftigkeit*. His favorite prefix — "Ur-." See Richie Robertson, "Antizionismus, Zionismus: Kafka's responses to Jewish Nationalism" in *Paths and Labyrinths: Nine Papers from a Kafka Symposium*, ed. by J. P. Stern and J. J. White (London: Institute of Germanic Studies of the University of London, 1985), pp. 29-31.

35. *Kafka's Diaries*, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

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contains, together with the Christian splendor Christian coldness also, the Jewish woman who is called '*Mutter*' therefore becomes not only comic but strange." So perhaps "Mama" would be a better name for a Jewish mother? It certainly would — "if only one didn't imagine '*Mutter*' behind it . . ."[36]

With insight added by malice, Richard Wagner once wrote of homesick, irredeemable Jewish strangers who, having arrogantly destroyed their relation with previous companions in sorrow, always find it impossible to create a new connection with that society to which they pretend to belong. And so Kafka, in Robertson's words, felt that Western Jews like him "were trapped uncomfortably between a sheltering Jewish community to which they could never return and Western society which would never completely accept them."[37] Gruesome as it was, this suspension in an empty social space was still the lesser evil. Much more macabre and grisly was the fact that the void was not "out there," but *inside* the man who tried in vain to reach the two equally elusive supports. Lacking all socially recognized authority for self-definition, lacking even the language of which identities are made, the victim could exist only *through this emptiness*, in the indescribable, unnamed gap between a lost and an unfound reality. Kafka found curiously unsatisfying his friend Max Brod's story, the *Jüdinnen*. Seeking an explanation, he noted in his diary: "The *Jüdinnen* lacks non-Jewish observers, the respectable contrasting persons who in other stories draw out the Jewishness so that it advances toward them in amazement, doubt, envy, fear and, finally, is transformed into self-confidence, but in any event can draw itself up to its full height only before them. That is just what we demand, no other principle for the organization of Jewish material seems justifiable to us."

The Jewishness of the Western Jew cannot assert itself on its own. Even in his Jewishness — which, after all, he does his best to hide in the secure darkness of family closets — the Jew depends on Gentile authority. It is they, the non-Jews, who are "respectable persons," who have the authority to define the meaning of being a Jew. It is they and they alone who decide on the principle which enables the Jew to set the bits and pieces of his "Jewish material" into a meaningful pattern. On their own, the Jews simply do not make sense. A story of the Jews on their own reads like a lie — and as a hermetically impenetrable one at that.

Perhaps more telling still is the un-self-conscious ease with which

36. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
37. Robertson, "Antizionismus, Zionismus," *op.cit.*, p. 28.

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the vantage point then shifts in Kafka's entry: "In the same way, too, the convulsive starting up of a lizard under our feet on a footpath in Italy delights us greatly, again and again we are moved to bow down, but if we see them at a dealer's by hundreds crawling over one another in confusion in the large bottles in which otherwise pickles are usually packed, then we don't know what to do."[38]

Seeking to prove his first impression of the *Jüdinnen*'s congenital fault was correct, Kafka must leave the perplexed mind of the insider and view the world through the discerning eye of the "respectable person" himself. His is the authority, and in his mind alone all proofs may be begotten and made binding. And what Kafka sees through the eye of a rich tourist or a pet-shop customer looking at the lizards is that, once heaped together and left to their own company, the Jews are ridiculously meaningless, incongruous and unappetizing. Like lizards in a pickle jar, Jews locked in their own company must be seen as out of their element, as thrown into an *unnatural* state. Like a lizard on a stony Italian gorge, the Jew "makes sense" (to those whose sense counts and whose look endows things with sense) only individually, when constituted by the tourist's curiosity as a tourist attraction. The *natural* state of the Jew is to be singled out in order to be examined, assessed and evaluated. A verdict will then be passed — the only verdict that sustains the order and meaning of his existence. Like the other lizards in the jar, other Jews do not matter. As Arthur Schnitzler observed, no Jew really respects another — no more than prisoners of war respect each other, especially when they have no hope. They may hate or adore, or even sometimes love each other. But they will never respect each other. All their emotional relations develop in an atmosphere of spiritual serfdom and ensuing duplicity in which respect is bound to be stifled.

A universal stranger himself — and perhaps the most insightful among universal strangers — Kafka unraveled and spelled out the universal traits of the stranger, that one and only hero of all his literary work. To be a stranger is to be rejected and to surrender the right to self-constitution, self-definition and self-identity. It is to derive one's sense from the relation with the native other, and from the other's examining gaze. It is to forget the skill of making a meaningful pattern out of the inherited "material." It is to surrender one's autonomy and, with that, the authority to make one's life meaningful. To be a stranger means to be able to live only a vicarious life of dissimulation.

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38. *Kafka's Diaries*, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

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By himself, the stranger is devoid of all attributes, a true *man without qualities*. As Gilman has observed, the Jew was expected to be different from both Jews and non-Jews. Whatever qualities may give him a body and thus draw him out of the void are graciously bestowed and may be withdrawn at a whim. In his absence of substance, the stranger is the archetype of universality: weightless, insubstantial, ineffable unless injected with other people's contents; nowhere at his "natural" place; the very antithesis of the concrete, the specific, the definite. The stranger is universal because he has no home and no roots. Rootlessness relativizes everything concrete and thus begets universality. In rootlessness both universality and relativism find their roots. Their hotly denied kinship is thus unmasked.

The Intellectuals' Neolithic Revolution

The neolithic revolution consisted in the shift from a nomadic to a settled life or, what amounts to the same thing, from gathering the fruits of nature to growing plants nature itself failed to produce. If this were the essence of the neolithic revolution, then its intellectual equivalent occurred in the years following Mannheim's depiction of the *intelligentsia* as the category of strangers who re-forge the bane of their homelessness into the weapon of universal truth.

In the 1980s, "colleagues have replaced a public, and jargon has supplanted English" — writes Jacoby. "American Marxists today have campus offices and assigned parking spaces." Indeed, "to be an intellectual requires a campus address." Under such new conditions, "the Marxist theoretical 'explosion' has the force of a seminar coffee break," while "a critical vision is itself evidence of personal failings."[39] Debray has defined each successive period in the last hundred years of French intellectuals' history by reference to the type of abode they occupied at the time (e.g., universities, publishing houses, mass media) — all different, but all equally homely, well-furnished, safe, warm, accomodating and often even hospitable.[40] If they have ever been nomads, intellectuals are no longer that. They have arrived. They have settled. They have their own plots to till.

Indeed, an enormous distance has been travelled since that *milieu artificiel* of aggrieved, militant and resolute draftsmen of the *Grand Design*, who — in Cochin's opinion — made their own a "society" in which "the

39. Rusell Jacoby, *The Last Intellectuals* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), pp. 172, 180, 203, 220.

40. See Régis Debray, *Le Pouvoir Intellectuel en France* (Paris: Ramsay, 1979).

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participants appear to be free, freed of all ties, of all obligations, of all social function."[41] The scientific-technological revolution promoted by a panoptical state exploded that quasi-society built of discussion and opinion — and sucked in the debris. The free intellectuals of yore have now turned into university professors, government consultants, experts and functionaries of warfare and welfare bureaucracies. Their thought emerges out of its estrangement. It has found the many homes it inhabits cozy and comfortable. The knights of universality are now the defenders of hospitals, colleges, opera houses and research institutes — of funds and jobs, salaries and statute books. They ceased long ago to draw their ranks in a solidary opposition to the society which made them into strangers. Hardly ever do they draw their ranks together at all — unless the very right of the expert to rule within his own realm of expertise is at stake. Apart from this one issue on which they are all united, there is much to divide them and so little to unite.

Mannheim's free-floating, estranged and inward-looking intellectual did not disapppear altogether, though most certainly he is now an exception. But he is at war not so much with parochial society as with the parochiality of his better established, sated and self-satisfied colleagues. It was that parochiality Adorno, the most prominent, prototypical free-floater, construed as the staunchest enemy of the miscarried "attempt to change the world": "What differs from the existent will strike the existent as witchcraft, while thought-figures such as proximity, home, security hold the faulty world under their spell. Men are afraid that in losing this magic they would lose everything, because the only happiness they know, even in thought, is to be able to hold on to something — the perpetuation of unfreedom."[42]

Looking at the rational world in which expertise and power merged and knowledge ceased to be the power of the powerless, Weber did not see much of a future for Adorno's and Horkheimer's position: "The problem which besets us now is not: how can this evolution be changed? — for that is impossible, but . . . what can we oppose to this machinery in order to keep a portion of mankind free from this parcelling-out of

41. Augustin Cochin, *La Révolution et la libre pensée* (Paris: Plon, 1924), p. XXXVI.

42. Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. by E. B. Ashton (London: Routledge, 1973), pp. 3, 33. His companion, Horkheimer, agreed: "Among the vast majority of the ruled there is the unconscious fear that theoretical thinking might show their painfully won adaptation to reality to be perverse and unnecessary." See Max Horkheimer, *Critical Theory*, trans. by Matthew J. O'Connell et al. (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972), p. 232.

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the soul. From this supreme mastery of the bureaucratic way of life."[43] Long before Mannheim raised the specter of the Last Judge and universal stranger, Weber composed his funeral dirge for the free soul: keeping free a portion of mankind was the most he felt entitled to hope for. Adorno and Horkheimer represented such a portion. They were strangers many times over: unattached scholars in the world of well-accomodated academics; Germans in a society which thought of them as Jews; exiles from a society which never fully became their home to a society they never wished to make their home; European philosophers thrown into a land of philistine anti-intellectualism.

Their only companions and reference were other strangers like themselves. Theirs was the life of exile, with (in Robert Michels' memorable description) its "brisk exchange of ideas on unoccupied evenings, the continued rubbing of shoulders between men of the most different tongues, the enforced isolation from the bourgeois world of their respective countries, and the utter impossibility of any 'practical' action."[44] Soon the impossible turned into the undesirable: what cannot be done is not worthy of doing. One can as well derive pride from one's impotence: deafness of the world testifies to the power of the message. With relish, Adorno and Horkheimer found in Paul Deussen's translation of *Upanishad* what they were groping for: a testimony of the irrevocable incompatibility between critical, uncompromising thought, and an effort aimed at mobilizing popular consensus leading to practical action. To make such an effort, the idea needs to develop into a neat theoretical system. In the process, it cannot remain uncompromising for long; soon it stops being critical.[45] An active role in life is not compatible with the salvation of the soul; the search for logical cohesion such an active role requires is not compatible with emancipatory critique. *Upanishad* (unlike Vedic religion), Cynics (unlike their Stoic successors), St. John the Baptist (unlike St. Paul) — all refused to produce cohesive, harmonious, academically respectable systems, as they stoutly refused any track with politics in whose fetid atmosphere the unbound spirit cannot breathe.

As estranged and marginalized intellectuals became fewer and more exotic in the world of a well-settled, practically engaged knowledge class, the more radical and otherworldly becomes their commitment

43. Quoted after J. P. Mayer, *Max Weber and German Politics* (London: Faber & Faber, 1956), p. 128.

44. Robert Michels, *Political Parties* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1919), p. 167.

45. See the note attached to the Herder & Herder American Edition of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. by John Cumming.

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to the universal and the absolute. They are strangers not just in relation to the "natives" and their dominant values. First and foremost, most blatantly and poignantly, they are strangers in relation to the *fellow members of the knowledge class*. They are traitors to their class loyalty, heretics to their Church orthodoxy. The universality they seek is forged out of the opposition to that particularity for which their own knowledge class (the class they reject and by which they are rejected) serves them as the prototype. It is the "academic science," the "established wisdom," the "bureaucratized knowledge" that stands for the sin of surrender to selfish, parochial interests. It is against those tropes of fall that the wrath and the most poisonous arrows are aimed.

The arrows, of course, never reach their intended targets. With knowledge effectively translated into institutionally entrenched expertise, Mannheim's vision of the homeless intelligentsia (an image which, even in the best of times, smacked of theoretical contrivance), looks increasingly nebulous. Experts are anything but rootless; nor can they be validly accused of *trahison des clercs*. They cannot betray commitments never undertaken. Theirs are specific tasks arising from specific problems. Set in a clear-cut, institutionalized section of an overall division of labor, they have no time for the ancient *querelle* between the locals and the universalists, no use for the battle between eternal truths and the scepticism of the modern Pyrrhonians. Their praxis as experts generates neither lust for certainty nor relativist inclinations. If anything, it invalidates both and, above all, the conflict between them and the need to choose. Unlike the huge, society-size gardens eyed greedily by free-floating intellectuals, each of the little allotments the experts cultivate can accomodate quite considerable authority inside, without considering their own confining boundaries a problem. With the urge to expand, the lust for universality fades. With wilting interest in the neighbor behind the partition, the horror of relativity peters out.

It seems that the cognitive perspective of the knowledge class, split as it now is into a multitude of loosely connected expert sections, favors neither universalism nor relativism, and cools down considerably the controversy between the two. No wonder the most popular philosophies of today are those which humbly admit localized, communally-based *boundaries* of truth, while at the same time striving to secure the possibility of distinguishing between right and wrong *inside* the accepted borderlines. One can say that in such philosophies communities (or forms of life, traditions, languages) have become synonymical with the idea of "objective truth": community is the area in which a

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which a truth may be agreed as objective and binding, while truth is objective and binding so far as there is a community which accepts this and thus makes it into a reality inside its boundaries. Community and truth are two rhetorical figures which refer to each other, each one legitimizing itself through the other in the world of experts and compartmentalized truth.

The Universality of Rootlessness

The "neolithic revolution" of the spiritual elite, the wondrous transformation of rootless intellectuals into the established knowledge class, is just a more spectacular (perhaps more deeply felt because of being "closer to home") case of a wider process which may be called *the privatization of strangeness*. A paradoxical corollary of privatization is the *universality of strangeness*: the mode of "being a stranger" is experienced, to a varying degree, by every member of contemporary society with its extreme division of labor and compartmentalization of functionally separated spheres. If members of the knowledge class live through such an experience, they do so as members of a society at large, rather than as scientists, technologists, thinkers or artists. In these latter capacities, their specialized activities, firmly anchored with the help of productive and distributive companies, institutionalized reward systems, "networks," "circles" and "pegs" (like coffee-houses, clubs, journals) on which their group-identity is fastened[46] and which sustain, control and service them, are factors of integration and belonging, rather than estrangement. However, in their private capacities — as individuals — members of the knowledge class share in the universal existential mode of which the experience of estrangement is a ubiquitous and important component.

As Luhmann has convincingly argued, "with the adoption of functional differentiation individual persons can no longer be firmly located in one single subsystem of society, but rather must be regarded *a priori* as socially displaced."[47] That is, the individual is a "displaced person" by definition: it is the very fact that he cannot be fully subsumed under any of the numerous functional subsystems, which only in combination constitute the fullness of his life process (the fact, in other words, that he does not belong fully to any of the subsystems and no

46. Cf. Warren O. Hagstrom and Charles Kadushin's contributions to *Production of Culture*, ed. by Richard A. Petersen (London: Sage, 1976).

47. Niklas Luhmann, *Love as Passion: The Codification of Intimacy*, trans. by Jeremy Gaines and Doris L. Jones (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 15.

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subsystem can claim his sole allegiance) that makes him an individual. In relation to each of the subsystems, the individual is a *partial stranger*; in relation to none of the subsystems, is he completely a native. One is tempted to say he is "fully at home" only with himself. Indeed, as Luhmann would say, for the contemporary individual the ego becomes the seat and focal point of all inner experience, while the environment, split into fragments with little lateral connection, loses most of its contours and much of its meaning-defining authority. And yet, this mode of "being at home with oneself" is highly problematic. It may come to be, if at all, only as an achievement of protracted and tortuous effort. The poor coordination between subsystems is reflected in the heterogeneity of the self. Partial estrangements are incorporated and experienced as the self's resilience to integration. The self is burdened with the impossible task of rebuilding the lost integrity of the world; or, more modestly, of sustaining the production of self-identity, doing on its own what was once entrusted to the native community. In fact, it is now inside the self that such a "native community," as the frame of reference for self-identity, must be construed. And it is only within the self's work of imagination that such a community has its necessarily precarious existence.

In terms of his biography, the contemporary individual passes a long string of widely divergent (uncoordinated at best, contradictory at worst) social worlds. At any single moment of his life, the individual inhabits simultaneously several such divergent worlds. At the end, he is "uprooted" from each and not "at home" in any. One may say he is the *universal stranger*. His is a social modality once pioneered and fully explored by Jews lost amidst rising European nationalisms. In this sense, *now we are all Jews*. What used to be, in the era of High Modernity, a communal Jewish experience, increasingly acquires universal value. The dilemmas of Jewish estrangement appear in retrospect prototypes of a much more universal condition.[48]

In another respect, however, the new and universal experience of strangeness (precisely for being universal, rather than confined to a selected category) represents a true novelty. Because of its universality, it is quite distinct from the passionate Jewish effort to raise to a level of

48. In Scholem's words, it is the fact that the assimilating Jew who "was not really at home, however much and emphatically he might proclaim himself to be" is today sometimes "accounted to his glory, in that it is taken as an image of the *condition humaine*." See Gershom Scholem, *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), p. 83.

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"civilized existence" that elusive and unattainable yet tempting target clearly drawn over the line of the horizon. Cuddihy has suggested the key to the Jewish 19th-century predicament was a necessity to apologize to the triumphant Protestant civil etiquette for their belated medievalism; and a continuous individual and collective, behavioral and ideological, though ultimately unsuccessful, attempt to do just that, and to have one's apology accepted.[49] This might or might not be true, particularly in the radically reductionist form in which Cuddihy put it. But the fact one knew to whom one needed to apologize to attain redemption from one's abominable strangeness is hardly in doubt.

The absence of such an address to which the apology could be sent is one of the most conspicuous and consequential features of the present era. Today, modern individuals have mostly their own private lives to turn to as the only place they may hope to build a home amidst universal homelessness. However, their hope is dashed. "(O)ver and over again, the cold winds of 'homelessness' threaten these fragile constructions. It would be an overstatement to say that the 'solution' of the private sphere is a failure; there are too many individual successes. But it is always very precarious."[50] And so far as the experience of estrangement is concerned, it is the fact that they are endemically precarious, even if they do not fail, which counts. Today's world does not abolish strangeness. But it does not offer any hope the stranger can be redeemed. And as the prospect of redemption grows increasingly dim, the emancipatory urge peters out.[51]

There is a substantive difference between being a stranger in a well-settled native world, and a stranger in the world on the move. In the first case, misery comes complete with the hope — and a program — of its termination. The apparently clear-cut hierarchy of native values and norms defines what is to be done and defines it with uncontested authority. The natives embody the human universal, which renders the stranger's form of humanity parochial and shameful. It is easy (perhaps natural) to confuse then the effort of assimilation to the dominant native standards with the promotion of universal truth; to

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49. See John Murray Cuddihy, *The Ordeal of Civility: Freud, Marx, Lévi- Strauss, and the Jewish Struggle with Modernity* (New York: Basic Books, 1974).

50. Peter L. Berger, Brigitte Berger and Hansfried Kellner, *The Homeless Mind* (London: Penguin, 1973), p. 168.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 145: "A world in which everything is in constant motion is a world in which certainties of any kind are hard to come by . . . What is truth in one context of the individual's social life may be error in another. What was considered right at one stage of the individual's social career becomes wrong in the next."

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define the malaise of a particular strangeness as the deformation or paucity of universality; to identity the urge to efface a specific difference with the need of clearing the site for the uniform and absolute rule of universal standards. In the second case, however, though the strangers remain strangers, they do not live any more among the natives; indeed, there are no such natives in sight. In the absence of uncontested standards — of such standards as may sensibly claim or aspire to ascendancy — strangeness does not feel as a *temporary* condition. Much less than before does it feel as an *unbearable condition*, one from which one has the *duty* to redeem oneself. Now difference bears no guilt; and the shame of being guilty of difference no longer prompts the culprit to escape from estrangement.

The vision of universality is born of rootlessness; but its supplies are being replenished only as long as the rootlessness remains a particular condition, a handicap, a disprivilege. Once rootlessnes itself turns into a universal condition, particularity has been effaced, though not in the way seen in the dreams of the rootless. Relativity becomes now the great equalizer: it is through peculiarity that one escapes the stigma of difference. It is only through setting oneself apart that one can share in the predicament of others and participate on equal footing in the universal human condition. Strangeness has become universal; or, rather, it has been dissolved which, after all, amounts to the same. If everyone is a stranger, no one is.

It remains to be seen to what extent the widespread aversion to grand social designs, the loss of interest in absolute truths, the privatization of redemptive urges, the reconciliation with the relative — merely heuristic — value of all life techniques, the acceptance of the irredeemable plurality of the world, etc. are a lasting consequence of that *abolition* of strangeness attained by raising it to the level of a *universal human condition*. These are the worrying, yet exhilarating trends usually subsumed under *postmodernity*,

What the inherently polysemous and controversial idea of *postmodernity* most often refers to (even if only tacitly) is first and foremost an acceptance of the ineradicable plurality of the world — not a temporary state on the road to the not-yet-attained perfection, sooner or later to be left behind, but the constitutive quality of existence. By the same token, postmodernity means a resolute emancipation from the characteristically modern urge to overcome difference and promote sameness. Indeed, it reverses the signs of the values central to modernity, such as uniformity and universalism. Once perceived as irreducible and unlikely to

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converge, neither to be dissolved in one life-form aiming at universality nor degraded by one form aiming at universal domination, a variety of life-forms is not merely grudgingly accepted but lifted to the rank of a supreme positive value.

Once the difference ceases to be an oppression and is not construed as a problem calling for action and resolution, peaceful coexistence of distinct forms of life becomes possible. The principle of coexistence replaces the principle of universalization, while the precept of tolerance takes the place of those of conversion and subordination. The presence of mutually exclusive standards neither offends the desire of logical congruity nor triggers a remedial action. In the plural and pluralistic world of postmodernity, every form of life is *permitted on principle*; or, rather, no agreed principles are evident which may render any form of life impermissible.

In the absence of such principles, one can expect the disappearance of one of the paramount grounds of the destructive urge. The self-assertion of different forms of life loses the character of a zero-sum game. Room for new forms can be found without vacating the space occupied by the extant ones. The most important reason for the rhetoric and practice of destruction loses thereby a good deal of its past cogency. So also does the romantic heroism of revolutionary novelty. Revolutions retain their appeal only as long as the experience of difference remains intolerable. The acceptance of relativity defuses the attraction of radical and condensed change; indeed, it renders revolution meaningless. If there are no standards to be preserved at the expense of others, there are no standards which need to be moved out of the way to enable others to exist. The strategy of innovation entails a strategy of destruction only if the novelty is meant to displace.

The acceptance of the permanence of differentiation (and of the plurality of the coordinated actions which support it) leads to the demise of grand designs of social engineering. This amounts to the erosion of the gardening or surgical stance, which throughout the modern age characterized the attitudes and policies of institutionalized powers. Modernity proclaimed the essential artificiality of the social order and the inability of society to attain an orderly existence on its own. It also proclaimed that the establishment of a social order requires the a-symmetrical distribution of agency — dividing society into actors and objects of their actions. The exclusive right of elected agencies to define order as distinct from chaos was articulated in the ideology of reason's superiority over passions, rational conduct over irrational drive,

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knowledge over ignorance or superstition. Opposition between such abstract values both generated and reflected practical social divisions. Most importantly, it serviced the perpetual condensation of autonomy and choice on one pole of the social division and delegitimation of the autonomous will of the other. By the same token, this opposition loses most of its cutting power once the impulse of domination melts in the atmosphere of coexistence and (chosen or enforced) toleration. It is unlikely to survive for long the fading of the engineering ambition that was its meaning and reason. It derived its sense from missionary projects and crusades; it can hardly outlive them.

The memory of the opposition prompts one to conceive its absence as the rehabilitation of irrationality and the surrender of reason. What is perceived in such a way, however, is merely the sudden and yet not fully grasped meaninglessness of the distinction at a time when the planned fate ceased to differentiate between forms of life anointed to govern and those marked for colonization or extinction. Irrationality is the waste turned out during the self-production of rationality. It is this nameless "beyond" for which the dominant powers that identified themselves as reason have no use. It is a by-product of designing ambitions, in the same way as weeds are the products of garden designs. It has no other meaning than someone's refusal to tolerate it; or, rather, once the empirical solvents have evaporated and only hard crystals of value are left, all its manifold meanings turn out to be that difference with which someone, somewhere, refused to live.

There are, as Higgins suggested a decade ago, *cognitive* and *post- cognitive* questions. The first have lost much of their allure; the second are asked with growing frequency. Cognitive questions stemmed from the axiom of the current or prospective oneness of the world. In the one and only world, a world that suffers no alternative to itself, the task is to fathom what this world demands of those who wish to find their place in it. The questions are, therefore, "How can I interpret this world of which I am a part? And what am I in it?" Post-cognitive questions do not enjoy the luxury the old axiom offered. They have hardly any axioms they may use as a confident start, nor do they have a clear address. Before they turn to exploring the world, they must find out what world(s) there is (are) to be explored. Hence: "Which world is it? What is to be done in it? Which of my selves is to do it?" — in this order.

Projecting back later discursive usages, McHale renames Higgins' questions as, respectively, *modernist* and *post-modernist*.[52] He observes as

52. Brian McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction* (London: Methuen, 1987), p. 10.

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well that, according to orthodox philosophical divisions, the first belong to epistemology, while the second are primarily ontological; thus "post-cognitive" questions are not *cognitive* at all, at least not in the strict sense. They reach beyond the boundaries of epistemology; or return to the fundamental issue of being, which is to be settled *before* epistemology may approach its task in earnest, and which most epistemological questions asked during the modern era assumed settled. And so the typically modern questions are, among others: "What is there to be known? Who knows it? How do they know it, and with what degree of certainty?" The typically postmodern questions do not reach that far. Instead of locating the task for the knower, they attempt to locate the knower himself. "What is a world? What kinds of worlds are there, how are they constituted, and how do they differ?" Even when sharing concern about knowledge, the two types of inquiry articulate their problems differently: "How is knowledge transmitted from one knower to another, and with what degree of reliability?" as against "What happens when different worlds are placed in confrontation, or when boundaries between worlds are violated?" Note that postmodern questions have no use for "certainty"; not even for "reliability." The one-upmanship of modernist epistemology looks hopelessly out of place in that pluralist reality to which the postmodern ontological inquiry is first reconciled and then addressed. Here that overwhelming desire of power which animated the search for the ultimate (and which alone could animate it) raises little passion. Only eyebrows are raised by the self-confidence which once made the pursuit of the absolute look as a plausible project.

It seems in the world of universal strangeness the stranger is no longer obsessed with the absoluteness of what ought to be; nor is he disturbed by the relativity of what is.

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*The Curse of Forgetting: Israel and the Holocaust**

Mosche Zuckermann

On March 2, 1988 Elkana performed an unprecedented act of bravery by publishing an article titled, "A Plea for Forgetting." Its logic led him to conclude there is "no more important political and pedagogical task for the leaders of [Israel] than to side with life, dedicate themselves to the future, and not deal constantly with the symbols, ceremonies and lessons of the Holocaust. They must eradicate the domination of this historical memory over our life."[1] The article appeared during the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories and immediately before the sentencing in the Demjanuk trial. Its main theme was the relation between the steady repression by the Israeli occupation, its "abnormal" effects on the occupiers, and the "abnormal" behavior that was the norm during the Holocaust. Elkana earned the right to make this association because of his own biography. He survived the Holocaust as a ten-year-old child deported to Auschwitz. He is what Evron calls[2] an "Auschwitz-graduate." As such, no "abnormality" of the military actions in the occupied territories can surprise him. In the past, he must have seen with his own eyes how a bulldozer "buried living men," how raving men "ripped artificial respirators out of the mouths of old men in hospitals," how "soldiers who took leave of their senses broke the arms of civilians and children." He was not

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1. Jehuda Elkana in *Ha'aretz* (March 2, 1988), p.13.
2. Boas Evron, "Education to Fascism and Flight" in *Yedioth Ahronoth*, weekend edition (March 4, 1988), p. 16.

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surprised, because after the Holocaust he must have realized "a similar behavior" was characteristic of many people he met. Thus he concluded: "what happened in Germany could happen everywhere to everyone, including my own people."

Confronted with the Israeli military's brutal behavior, he sought the roots of such a phenomenon. He resisted an ethnic explanation of the horrible acts and suggested a connection between uncontrolled behavior and ideological extremism. Although he was aware "personal frustration can lead to abnormal behavior," he questioned whether there was a connection between economic, social and military stress and the growth of a "generation whose overriding majority is frustrated and sees no future in a simple, personal, existential sense."

According to Elkana, the relation of Israeli society to the Palestinians is stamped with "a deeply-rooted existential fear, which lives on a very particular interpretation of the Holocaust, such as the readiness to believe that the whole world is against us and we are the eternal victims." Thus, he concludes: "Two peoples emerged from Auschwitz: A minority which claims, 'It shall never happen again,' and a fearful majority which claims, 'It shall never happen again *to us*'." If these are the only two possible lessons of the Holocaust, Elkana could be expected to support the first interpretation and reject the second. However, it is not a question of deciding in favor of one or the other. He rather emphasizes the "normative claim that every life teaching or perception which draws its validity from the Holocaust is a misfortune," and adds, "An atmosphere in which a whole people determines its relation to the present and shapes its future on the basis of the teachings of the past is a misfortune for a society which wants to live in relative peace and security." Elkana accepts that "history and collective memory are an integral part of every people's culture." But he insists "the past should in no way dominate the future of a society and the fate of a people." The survival of democracy itself is in danger, "once the memory of history's victims functions as an active factor in the democratic process." Thus "without such a deep imprint of the Holocaust on the national consciousness, the conflict between Jews and Palestinians would not have led so many people to 'abnormal' acts, and political processes would not have wound up in a dead end." There is "no greater danger for Israel's future than a situation where the Holocaust penetrates the consciousness of the whole Israeli population — including the consciousness of most of the younger generation who have not experienced it." Although "the whole world should remember in the future," the Israelis "must forget."

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Elkana's courage is not so much in his readiness to risk being misunderstood as desecrating Holocaust victims, since no one can accuse a Holocaust survivor of this. Neither is it in his teachings drawn from his survival in hell, nor in the provocative connection between the Holocaust horror and the behavior of the Israeli occupation forces. Elkana is courageous because his exhortation "to purge our life of the domination of this historical memory" shakes the most important basis of legitimation of Zionist ideology. Although he has not done this consciously in his article, he points to the need to rethink how the Zionist state came into being "independently of the Holocaust, and to look at the history of Israel in the last twenty years, independently of a 'deep existential fear'." He wants to show that, without the Holocaust, this "existential fear" would not have had the decisive role in the determination of Jewish identity in Israel. The occupation would not have become an integral part of Israel's identity and its ideological legitimation would have been superfluous.

At the same time, Elkana's plea for forgetting is misleading. Israel, as a collective subject, as a state, cannot be accused of forgetting the Holocaust because it never remembered it. From the beginning Israel repressed the Holocaust and used a *Holocaust-image* as a quasi-concrete historical illustration for the right of the formation, existence and development of a Zionist state in all its phases — including the occupation after 1967. Israel has never confronted the universal meaning of the Holocaust as a particular event having to do with much more than just Jews. Instead, it used the convenient myth of the Holocaust as an ideological construct for the legitimation of a solution for what had previously been called the "Jewish problem."

This requires some preliminary explanation. First, one must become clear about memories, i.e., about what is retained of historical "events" (in this case, the Holocaust) in collective memory, because the peculiarity of a past event is absolute and irrefutable, its "resuscitation" as an event impossible. Its subsequent description acts as an *equivalent* — a substitute through which the present penetrates the reality of the past. This description, as comprehensive as it may be, is necessarily partial, since the reproduction is not the historical event itself, nor is the historiography of the past reality the act of conscious remembering or striving by remembering. To "commemorate" cannot be understood as the grasping of comprehensive details constituting the historical event. Such a total history cannot be written and, if it could, it would not be understood. The first consequence of this is that the reception of a

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historical experience turns out to be a *Rashoman* phenomenon because historiographers, with their unavoidable differences of perception, inevitably produce *Rashoman*-like representations of events. Consequently, each statement found in the *Rashoman* sphere can be regarded and appropriated as a code.

To take one example, we can presume the expression "six million Jews" has imprinted itself on the consciousness of nearly all Jews after 1945 as a paradigmatic paraphrase of "Shoah" — itself a normative symbol of an historical event. This does not mean they know the structure of the extermination process or even its everyday details. Even if the memory of all those details could be absorbed, it is doubtful one could bear it all. But the code makes possible the apprehension of the ungraspable, and thereby minimizes the need to verbalize the unimaginable. Holocaust survivors themselves indulge in such a codification — indeed they must do so or their memory would force them to constantly confront the horrors of their past. Somehow, the dreams of concentration camps' survivers actually embody the most authentic resuscitation of that historical past, mainly because in these dreams the experience of the past occurs as a psychological effect, i.e., as a real and (as far as possible) undistorted reaction to the horrifying essence of past events.

Here, however, we are not concerned with the individual Holocaust survivor's encounter with his past. The debate is over the Jewish collective in Israel. If the individual has trouble with honestly coming to terms with his past, because of the pain involved, the collective has the additional obstacle of its purposeful indifference. It is really interested in determining its post-1945 identity as a society and a state. There is a difference between the repression of an individual Holocaust surviver and of the collective. Individuals need repression to survive psychologically. Their ability to forge a "new beginning" is predicated on a break with their past. The collective is interested also in repression, so the "new beginning" it seeks (and, therefore, also the soul of the "new Jew") will not be too contaminated with the memory of that hell. Its ability to break with its past is predicated on the creation of an ideological "new beginning." But in both cases the Holocaust is merely repressed out of consciousness, not eliminated. Neither the rationalization of the individual nor the ideology of the collective is able to remove the latent but still perceptible effects of the Holocaust on the unconscious. For the collective subject, this pattern has far-reaching consequences.

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There is a difference between simply lying and this attempt to erase the Holocaust from the psychic-existential experience of "everyday" consciousness by reducing it to ideology. This latter process turns on a politically inserted code. It is this *code* Elkana really addresses when he speaks of "a deeply-rooted existential fear which lives off a very particular interpretation of the Holocaust, such as a readiness to believe the whole world is against us and we are eternal victims." He interprets this "ancient belief held by so many people as Hitler's tragic and paradoxical victory." But what Elkana misses is that this belief did not simply come into being; "to a great extent it has been institutionally produced. Regardless of the age and authenticity of this belief, it has had a highly functional role both in the founding and legitimation of the state of Israel; consequently, the state has exploited and entrenched it." The *myth* of the Holocaust now takes the place of the Holocaust itself, and the "existential fear" has been turned into an ideological postulate. The Israeli collective thus makes a double demand. On the one hand, in order to lend support to the claim that has been a "new beginning," the Holocaust should be cut out of the being of the collective; on the other, one has to hold to the memory so a "new beginning" can be ideologically grounded. From the perspective of the state, the code of the Holocaust is to be cultivated without enabling the Holocaust itself to penetrate too deeply into the collective consciousness.

In this sense, the Eichmann trial was primarily an act of the Israeli state. As such, it was both the carrying out of "historical justice" and a declaration that, after all, the Jewish people had not been beaten. Thus the court proceedings were meant to symbolize the Jewish constitutional state in its paradigmatic confrontation with the hell of the Holocaust. However, in the Eichmann trial the reality of the Holocaust had not yet been entirely eclipsed by the myth. There were some genuine encounters between the Holocaust (personified by Eichmann) and victims, exemplified by the breakdown on the stand of witness after witness. These eruptions of truth were unsettling. The collective respected the collapse of the witnesses, but at the same time distanced itself from them. The collapsing did not mesh with the new national self-respect. It did not fit with the new power and collective pride. In their "Diaspora imprisonment," Holocaust witnesses are tolerated; they are even necessary as a symbol exemplifying the need for a Jewish state. But they are unwanted insofar as they embody unresolved dilemmas — that *historical* reality, on behalf of which the witnesses

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psychically-collapsed will, pressed into collective memory, succumbs to a metamorphosis, condensing ceremonially into a "day of remembrance of the Holocaust and its courageous heroes."

The Israeli collective is not interested in remembering the Holocaust as much as the myth grown out of it. Thus it should come as no surprise that, years later, the Demjanuk trial, staged from the beginning for its "pedagogic" value, should get bogged down in the question of whether the accused really *was* the historical criminal the state of Israel wanted to judge. The collective was irritated with the intended meaning of this act, upon which it wanted to bestow the status of a document and of a memorial before the passing away of this generation of executors and survivers. An Israeli lawyer fought vehemently for the presumed innocence of the accused. In the course of his defense, he demonized the Soviets as the true powers of evil and questioned the credibility of surviving witnesses by appealing to the unreliability of their memory. These themes ended up entangling public discussion of the trial in numerous academic debates, the combined effect of which was to make it clear that after 40 years it is difficult if not impossible to prove the remembered murderer is the one now in the dock. In the state's hands, the intended memorial to remembering became unintentionally a monumental shattering of memory.[3]

This does not mean the shattering of the memory was an explosive event. There has been a long drawn out process, whereby the Israeli state has gradually backed off from its obligations connected with the Holocaust by increasingly holding onto these codified symbols. This can be seen most clearly in Israel's relations with Germany. For understandable reasons, Israel did not refuse the proffered reparations payments from the "other Germany." In so doing, it precipitated the materialization of sin. Today Israel maintains considerable economic and cultural contacts with West Germany. But the same Israel steadfastly prohibits works of Richard Wagner being performed or aired on public radio. This is by no means contradictory for, from the very beginning, Israel had no possibility to "remember" the Holocaust as such. It would not be easy for

3. These sentences were written before the judgment was rendered in the Demjanuk trial. Yet no matter how the trial turns out, the Jewish collective in Israel will never be able to know whether they actually judged the murderer "Ivan of Treblinka." Tragically, and contrary to the original intentions, this formally institutionalized act of the Israeli state has benefited Holocaust disclaimers, who try to undermine the place of the code "extermination of Jews" in the collective memory of the non-Jewish world.

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Israel to give up this last theatrical memory. In fact, "remembering" has already shown it needs periodically to be refreshed by the likes of the Demjanuk trial. If we understand this as the need to formally identify and ceremonially judge the representative of historical horror as a substitute for the confrontation of the collective with its historical past, then the banning of Wagner's music can be seen as the ideological paradigm for the Israeli collective's chosen mode of "remembering" the Holocaust.

It is also the paradigm for "the world's" remembering the Holocaust — that same world which "saw" the murder of a people before its very eyes without lifting a finger. In retrospect, the "world" usually does not lift a finger. Rather, it prefers to let itself be subsequently plagued by its conscience. While somewhere the most horrifying abomination in history occurs, somewhere else life goes on as usual. "The world" hardens into normalcy. Similarly, in Tel Aviv 45 years ago, one celebrated Purim or lived through a simple everyday routine, while in another part of the world Jews were led to the gas chambers. There is nothing unusual in this. It simply shows that blunted indifference is as salient a feature of human nature as sympathy and compassion. To be sure, many years later, after the founding of the state of Israel, historical investigations were published on the theme of how the Jewish population in Palestine confronted the Holocaust. It played a very marginal role, if any at all. It simply could not have stood up against the overwhelming apparatus of extermination.

The state of Israel arose as a consequence of the Holocaust, with the support of a "world" with a guilty conscience. Without raising the hypothetical question whether and under what conditions it would have been possible for Israel to become a state without the Holocaust, one can claim that, in the wake of the "final solution," the decision was made to solve the "Jewish problem" politically. It was hard to be against this, not least of all because the Israeli collective for its part hoped to eliminate once and for all the "Jewish Problem" through an enlightened and flourishing society capable of providing for itself and of bringing about a new reality in which the Jewish diaspora would be an anachronism. What would be more comfortable from the standpoint of the "world," which had been so passive when Jews were being exterminated? Now it could be active, granting a state as compensation for a Holocaust already suffered.

This was not the way either side saw it at the beginning. But now, after part of this exchange has been historically realized, there is no reason not to grasp it for what it is. Both sides, the Jews and the "world,"

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can codify the Holocaust as the cementing element of their settlement, as an equivalent for "the resurrection of the Jewish people in the land of their fathers." The Jewish collective in Israel receives a credit, a "Holocaust credit." For its part, it must prove itself worthy of such a credit.

On the surface it looked as if the Jewish collective in Israel had gotten rid of its "Diaspora-tainted" past. It turned in astonishing performances in agriculture, technology and industry; it raised significant educational and cultural institutions; it created a powerful and effective army, as well as an imposing infrastructure for expanding settlement. But beneath this Western, enlightened, productive, and hard-working collective was a creditor who needed to think of itself as a partner in a rational undertaking. As a result, Israel continued to appear as the most pleasant corner of the Middle East, and the"world" overlooked the germinating problem which later, at least after 1967, would be called the "Palestinian problem."

Should we then consider the Palestinian problem an effect of the "Holocaust of the Jews"? Palestinian propaganda often tries to draw this parallel. Anywhere in the world disposed against Israel they compared Israel's crimes with the Nazis', wallowing in wicked stupidity. But when an opportunity arose, Israel itself justified these same crimes by means of the Holocaust.

The original sin of ideologically instrumentalizing the "memory of the Holocaust" was committed by the Jewish-Israeli collective. At the beginning it was a slow, somewhat shamed use, and not as necessary as it later became, as long as Israel was able to represent itself as David vs. the Arabic Goliath. As David slowly but steadily took on the form of an "enlightened occupier," the Holocaust references became more prominent. In the end, "enlightenment" itself did nothing more than mask the deplorable metamorphosis of David into Goliath. Suddenly, one discovered that the more the "Holocaust credit" shrank, the more there were fatal "shots in the air"; and increasingly, the "world" became aware of what brutal actions the Israeli soldiers, those sons and grandsons of the Holocaust, were capable.

On April 22, 1988, a few days before the judgment of Demjanuk by the Israeli court — after the presumably Israeli-directed death of the Palestinian Abu Jihad in Tunis, and the quiz-show "The Holocaust and Heroism" in Warsaw (carried live on Israeli television) — the journalist Israel Eldad remarked in the newspaper *Yedioth Ahronoth*, "The personal identity of Demjanuk is of no historical meaning. Of course

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he deserves death, but ultimately he did not have the weight of Eichmann and not even of the Austrian President of state." This was the background for his claim that "Abu Jihad, on the contrary, was none other than a Palestinian version of Eichmann," which he followed by comparing the attack on Abu Jihad with a fantasized attack on Hitler in 1933.[4]

In the same publication Avraham Scharir, Minister of Justice and Tourism of the "Government of National Unity," reported his successful visit to Auschwitz: ". . . there in the mass grave I laid a little sack of earth from the Holy Land. Tears stood in my eyes. I almost broke down sobbing. It was a symbolic gesture in honor of the ashes of the millions who could have no grave, whose ashes and bones were strewn among foreign fields."[5] The Minister was obviously aware of the import of the confrontation of the ambassador of "national preservation" with Jewish mass graves. With repressed emotion, he allowed himself tears in his eyes without at the same time giving way to unrestrained crying. He was under the obligation to fulfill his role as the official representative of the Israeli state with appropriate "symbolic gestures." He showed "honor" to those millions whose bones were strewn through "foreign fields" by uniting their "ashes" with "earth from the Holy Land." A handful of Israel's earth thus transported to Auschwitz will bind the victims of the Holocaust with Zionism. Similarly, the state of Israel and the commemoration of the Holocaust become one. After cementing such strong ideological foundations, Scharir attempted to spell out his conclusions from the "teachings" of the Holocaust. First he took care of the unity of the Israeli collective: "In Auschwitz everything looks different. What may appear important in Israel is minimized here — the quarrels, rivalries, the war among Jews. As I walked around there, arm in arm with Minister of Education Isaac Navon, I understood how artificial the subdivision into parties is. . . . In Auschwitz we all see what can happen to a stateless people. Only here can one grasp how justified is our insistence on security." After he thickened the coalitional cement and strengthened national unity, he could devote himself to present political questions.

The very same trope that made it possible for Eldad to draw an analogy between Eichmann and Abu Jihad enabled the Israeli Minister of

4. Israel Eldad, "Ever Forward — From Abu Jihad to Demjanuk," in *Yedioth Ahronoth*, weekend edition (April 4, 1988), p. 15.

5. Avraham Sharir, "Consequences of Auschwitz," in *Yedioth Ahronoth*, weekend edition (April 22, 1988), p. 5.

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Justice to compare Arafat to Hitler. "Everyone ignored the warning in Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. No one believed him. Maybe this time we should believe Arafat when he says he will erect a Palestinian state in three phases: the first phase in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza; then unification with Jordan; and then the liberation of Israel." To which he added: "If one reads the inscription on the gates of Auschwitz, '*Arbeit macht frei*,' one can imagine what kind of 'liberation' Arafat would mete out to us if he succeeded in having his plans realized." He concluded, "We have a right to rely on our security. We are obligated to shrink from political experiments." Scharir made the Holocaust code even more explicit: "A people who has survived the Holocaust cannot take risks. We live and we lived for some 100 years without peace. The Jews of Europe no longer live because for five long years they lacked security. One can live without peace, but without security there is no existence. Therefore no kind of political experiment can be risked." From these premises the derivation of the decisive step was easy: "Every boy and every girl must visit Auschwitz. They will return permeated with the feeling of the necessity and the importance of a homeland. We must be a strong people in our homeland. We must build up the state and increase its power. We need a strong army and a high national morale. We are obligated to stop all internal strife and superfluous parties. We are Jews, we have a common fate which offers an answer to all our problems in the present and in the future."

If this is actually "the teaching of Auschwitz" that constitutes the Israeli state's identity, then this is what Elkana presumably meant when he pleaded "to stamp out the domination of the historical memory over our life." In any case, that is what I mean by the similar claim that the collective subject, Israel, never really remembered the Holocaust. It is impossible to remember the Holocaust as a reality, as the concrete perceptible objectification of an ideologically-planned, industrially-organized and bureaucratically-realized systematic extermination of people. It is impossible to remember the real course of a horrifying terror set in motion as the legal and political embodiment of the "solution" of the outlined "problems." It is impossible to remember Auschwitz as an everyday routine. Therefore we should not be concerned with attorney Scheftel "turn[ing] us into liars as was tried during the long month of the trial," as Eliahu Rosenberg, one of the trial witnesses, put it.[6] Scheftel is not in a position to do any such thing, because no one

6. Noah Klinger and Gaby Brun, "You are Ivan the Terrible," in *Yedioth Ahronoth* (April 19, 1988), p. 11.

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who was not "there" could grasp the essence of what is important. Rosenberg's tragedy lies in his being called as a participant, almost as a historical spokesman, in a state memory-coining ceremony that disfigured the historical events into a horrible farce. In that role, he unwittingly legitimated Eldad, Scharir and others like them as typical preservers of the Holocaust-commemoration in the State of Israel in 1988.

Precisely because of its historical uniqueness and incomparability, one can only remember the Holocaust as a dichotomous paradigm of human existence — as a matrix reflecting that which is a permanent threat to this existence, and as an ethical decision. As such, it is simply horrible. The Holocaust is the objective essence of the fundamental relations between murderer and murdered, criminal and victim. It symbolizes the nadir in the repression of man. It embodies the possibility of a total destruction of mankind and of human worth, the dehumanization of human beings. All those confronted with this Holocaust see themselves faced with the fundamental and inescapable dichotomous matrix of their own identity. They must decide between the identity of murderer and murdered. Because of its far-reaching consequences, this is the hardest and most extreme moral decision. Choosing the identity of the murdered entails the elementary position of a categorical, existential obligation with respect to life, dignity and freedom.

Historically, Jews were the main victim of the apparatus of extermination. They, more than any other people, were the object of the Nazi murder machine. Therefore, immediately after the Holocaust and in terms of this identity matrix, there was no doubt what Jews in general and the Jewish collective in Israel would choose. The condition of the Jews, of being the murdered ones, moved the "world" to agree to a Jewish state in 1948. As victims of repression, the Jews were granted a "Holocaust-credit." They were the main victims of that historical event, which one could uniquely remember as a paradigm of human existence. After the Holocaust, one measured them, and justifiably so, with a particularly rigorous and uncompromising set of standards. If a central dimension of human existence is embodied in the dichotomous relation between murderer and murdered, then the existence of the collective subject of Israel, that symbol *par excellence* of the state institutionalized solution to persecution, raises the horrifying question: "Has the victim become the murderer?"

The "world" is apparently quite comfortable in regard to this question. The conscience of the "world" has been considerably lightened by this metamorphosis. It is easier to dispose of one's guilt with regard

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to knee-breaking Jews than with regard to Jews with broken knees. But here we are not talking about the "world." It is the Jewish collective in the state of Israel that is not able to get away from the confrontation with the horrible truth that each "abnormality" in the Gaza strip, each victim of a "shot in the air" on the West Bank, each act of brutal repression derived directly or indirectly from the Israeli occupation, distances the Israeli collective from the ethical-humane, from their obligatory inheritance of the imposed identity as Holocaust victim. It increasingly entangles the state of Israel in a mentality embodied by the murderer. Those who use the saying, "I lost my reason in Auschwitz," to justify every crime of the Israeli state, make a mistake. Not their reason, but their ethics were burned there; whether they know it or not, it profanes the commemoration of the victims of Auschwitz. Every Eldad must know that so long as the analogies made by him between Eichmann and Abu Jihad are valid, so are the comparisons made by the Palestinians with broken knees between Eldad and Eichmann. Every Scharir must know that so long as the "earth out of the Holy Land" in the little sack he laid in Jewish mass graves in Auschwitz is threaded with the blood of Palestinian victims, he profanes the memory of the victims of the Holocaust. With every repression based on the senseless comparison between Arafat and Hitler, with each application of the demagogic logic that "a people which has experienced the Holocaust can take no risks," with each assertion that the Israeli collective can live "without peace" and consequently can accept "no political experiments and take no risks," Scharir profanes the memory of the victims of the Holocaust from which he claims to draw his "teachings."

The Jewish people do not have the "right to forget." This people, more than any other, carries with it the history of persecution. This people, more than any other, must mourn for all those murdered. This people will not exist in the state of Israel, in that state risen out of the Holocaust of the Jews; they will not exist "like all peoples in relative peace and in relative security" if they decide "to purge the domination of the historical memory from life."

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Back to Union Station

Jeanne Schuler

There are no whistles or trains. Still, the hum of activity in St. Louis' newly renovated Union Station recalls the building's past better than the dumpy structures nearby that service the occasional passenger train to the city. Restoring the Romanesque terminal and recycling the huge train shed into hotel, food court, shopping bazaar, lake, and beer garden were engineering feats and a commercial success. A growing number of cities are plotting their own "union stations," multi-use attractions that pull in tourists and conventions, and also pump up local pride. A dazzling downtown has become the hottest goal for the current generation of renewal. As emblems of the curious state of public life in a consumer society, these new gathering spots deserve attention.

The Rouse company designs projects with its founder's wisdom in mind: "there's a yearning for life at the heart of the city — a yearning for active places and personality and human scale. It's not a fad; it's very real."[1] A real desire but not for real life. Snapshots of urban scenes fill the new Union Station. Fountains, lamps, trees and benches are laid out in neighborhood[2] fashion. Memory kiosks feature letters solicited nationwide that reminisce about the station in its heyday. An open-air market brings a faintly foreign flavor. Like Baltimore's Inner

1. Gurney Breckenfield, "Jim Rouse Shows How to Give Downtown Retailing New Life," *Fortune*, 4/10/78, p. 84.

2. "Neighborhoods" is the planner's term for the various areas of Union Station. The original station was designed by Theodore Link of St. Louis after a national architectural competition was held in 1891. Reportedly inspired by the old walled city of Carcasonne in France, Union Station had the largest train shed in the world in 1894. The headhouse was restored with meticulous attention to the original decor by HOK of St. Louis.

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Harbor, the setting suggests leisure: strolling, eating, browsing, conversing, performance fudge-making, and people-watching from benches with backs where you need not pay to sit. Street life on this movie set is safe and vibrant again, only with a tourist, not an ethnic throng. Vendors at work, smells and sounds of food cooking, the fire-eater entertaining the crowd, rowboats on the lake. This scene — coded down to the brushstrokes on signs — charms even the skeptic.

Modern retail space in the US was conceived by Disneyland with reverie as a major component.[3] Its glitzy fantasy and folksy village sets were early transplanted to the mall, which often became the *de facto* town center after the real main street folded. While exhuberance reigns in centers such as Edmonton's in Alberta, others seek less frenzy.[4] The festival or marketplace malls — the trademark of Rouse — further blur the distinction between retail and public space as the features of city life are continually evoked. Where are we in Union Station? A museum, a shopping or amusement center, a city district, a restoration? This site does not feel like private property when you bring a book, browse among mementos of city history, tour the diesel collection, visit relatives. The restrained commercial hype and semblance of street life conjure the "meet me in St. Louis" mood missing from the urban emptiness outside. Street life is preserved indoors as an artifact of the past.

The public-private blur goes beyond atmosphere. Urban renewal — like garbage, housing, roads, prisons, sewage, mail — is increasingly the business of the private sector, with government as its overseer. To draw a redevelopment map in St. Louis, follow the investment corridor and its downtown employers, medical centers, universities, corporations, and historical districts prime for gentrification. The city was "reborn" around these investment fiefdoms.[5] St. Louis pioneered the

3. Discussed by Richard Francaviglia in "Main Street USA," a paper given at the Popular Culture Association meeting and cited in by William Kowinski, "The Malling of America," *New Times*, June 1, 1978). Kowinski observes that movies have returned the favor by using malls as sets, e. g., *Dawn of the Dead* by George Romero and *Back to the Future*. Cf. *Malling of America*, (New York: Morrow, 1985).

4. See Kowinski's, "Endless Summer at the World's Biggest Shopping Wonderland," *Smithsonian*, (December, 1986). Besides 800 stores with 11 major department stores, 110 eating places, 200 stores for women and 35 for men, and 50 shoe stores, the mall offers a skating rink, a Spanish galleon in its own lake, 4 submarines, swimming, waterslides, tanning, animal displays, and a petting zoo.

5. The history of renewal in St. Louis is reviewed by E. Terrence Jones in *Cities Reborn*, ed. Rachelle Levitt (Washington, DC: Urban Land Institute, 1987). Boston, Louisville and Pittsburgh were the other miracles surveyed. In its publications, the institute rarely criticizes the big investor's perspective on urban renewal. Lafayette Square is

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notion of private leadership in city planning with Chapter 353, passed in 1949. It transfers government powers (eminent domain) to for-profit companies in blighted areas. So when ailing cities and restoration became big budget items in the 1970s, St. Louis promptly absorbed an immense share of public money.[6] Though the biggest rehabilitation project ever undertaken under the federal incentive program (a 25% tax credit), Union Station ($155 million) was only one of 72 separate Chapter 353 areas formed since 1960 that account for a total investment of over $2 billion.

The trickle-out from a thriving central business district is an article of redeveloper's faith often refuted in fact. Atlanta — where the boom coexists with the highest poverty rate in the nation — is not an exception. The abatement on property taxes from Chapter 353 (the corporation may receive and/or pass through full abatement for years 1-10 and 50% abatement for years 11-25) cost St. Louis $40 million in 1986 with almost $6 million denied to the public schools. The Urban Land Institute reports that "given the nature of St. Louis' taxation system, the public schools do not share in either the tax gains from sales or from earnings that redevelopment procures. Although the revenues lost to the schools are only about 3% of the School District's total budget, they would nevertheless represent a significant contribution to improved public education, which is key to increasing the demand for city housing."[7]

The Rouse company expands the base of prosperity by hiring minorities and by minimizing neighborhood disruption in situating its projects. It is exceptional. The much proclaimed public-private marriage in development involves much armtwisting. Companies may blackmail city government for costly concessions in exchange for maintaining local headquarters, as Con-Agra did in controlling design and access to Omaha's riverfront development. With renewal funds dried up, larger cities barter for urban amenities. Zoning incentives — described as new social contracts between developers and city — trade office volume or height for plazas, atriums, arcades, and pedestrian walkthroughs. In

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cited as an example of a gentrified neighborhood where renovated Victorian rowhouses or townhouses sell from $50,000 to $180,000. "The few remaining shells in need of major rehabilitation are priced upwards of $5,000, whereas in the early 1970s, most shells were selling for under $1,000" (172).

6. "Through the federal fiscal year of 1985, St. Louis led the nation in the use of the investment tax credit program (ITC), according to the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Between FY 1982 and FY 1985, St. Louis used the tax credit for 458 projects (many of which include more than one building). New Orleans, which ranked second at the time, used the ITC for 171 projects" (*Cities Reborn*, p. 168).

7. *Cities Reborn*, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

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San Francisco, developers of new skyscrapers pay $5 per square foot for mass transportation, allow 1 square foot of mandatory open space for every 50 square feet of building, and provide residential units in exchange for downtown towers. If any real estate remains downtown, it may be exchanged for low-income housing in the future. Barter, as Goodman observes, is an absurd way to run a city. "If land control is used to bargain for concessions, then the more you get, the more you have to give up. You build bigger and bigger buildings blotting out more and more sunlight, creating more traffic congestion, in order to improve a subway system or school. We create a less liveable city in order to create a more liveable one. Similarly, in Vietnam, the US army once explained how they had to destroy a town in order to save it."[8]

There are fewer contradictions than ironies in this urban scene. Irony in the grand station where only toy trains whistle. Irony in the revaluing of cities after the "blight of dullness,"[9] in suburban life. Irony in the effort to animate downtowns with the creatures that destroyed them, the cities under glass. Irony in big department stores falling prey to the glitzy arcades which had earlier been destroyed by the big stores at the close of the 19th century. Above all, irony in the struggle to reconstruct the sense of place that was systematically destroyed through much planning, "to make cities more than concentrations of capital and skylines. To make them places."[10]

In her brilliant study of city life, Jane Jacobs identifies four elements of the complex diversity that accounts for urban vitality: mixed primary uses in the district, small blocks and frequent corners, variation in the ages of buildings, dense concentrations of people.[11] What animated a neighborhood was uniformly treated as blight by most planners, who sacrificed diversity to homogeneity and dullness. The housing project — epitomized by St. Louis's Pruitt Igoe — was only the most glaring example of the "rational" cleansing of urban messiness. Without regard for the streets, the sidewalk, and the neighborhood clusters, cities lost those qualities that attached people to them. The village aspects of the great cities were made over by the machine of modernism, and one rarely harbors warm thoughts for machines.

Jacobs' is now the received wisdom. Public housing fiascos and the preservation movement helped to harness the bulldozer. Diversity is

8. Robert Goodman, "Dealing Land in the Land of the Deal," *Zeta*, (May 1987), p. 87.
9. Jane Jacobs' phrase.
10. Robert Campbell, "Back to Basics," *Urban Land*, (May 1987), p.8.
11. Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961), p. 150.

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praised on all sides as residential, cultural, retail, office and religious:[12] uses mingle and zoning platitudes come under fire. But a sense of place so long neglected cannot be engineered by a planning team. A rich urban context arises from "the small change of lowly, unpurposeful and random sidewalk contacts,"[13] not from a design manual. The vital signs measured by Jacobs are recoverable as image more easily than in substance.

Not surprisingly, much of the literature on cities concerns image creation. "Image analysis"[14] becomes a tool in marketing cities for their stimulating visual environment. The harbor, skyline, railroad terminal, riverfront, markets and wharves — those features that separate "someplace" from "anyplace" — anchor the affection that lures investors. The National League of Cities functions increasingly as a fashion consultant: "since a strong urban image is necessary for establishing a sense of place, and a sense of place is important for attracting and holding people and business, the more populous and more diverse a community is, the greater its need for common ground, for a sharing of symbols and images. This is best accomplished through clear, exciting, high-quality communication."[15]

The labor of reseeding the city for real grassroots diversity, e. g., the unslumming process prescribed by Jacobs, does not fit into the dazzling downtown plan favored by city leaders. Swatches of urban character are assembled, but the experiences that drew them into a context are missing. Hence the outward migration from St. Louis by all classes continues; a city designed for entertainment and investment does not necessarily make a desirable residence. Despite the blight of dullness, the edge of suburban life — schools and security — is still decisive.

The push for more public spaces accompanies an intense debate about civil society and the supposed unraveling of ideologies. Monuments and heritage are refurbished together — as if constituting a communal bulwark against the sort of possessive and expressive individualism deplored in *Habits of the Heart*. Since ancient times, public space has been regarded as one index of the political life of a community. Aristotle believed that if commerce were ousted from the *agora*,

12. Consider St. Peter's Church abutting Citicorp plaza and tower on Lexington Avenue in New York.

13. Jacobs. p. 72.

14. The aesthetic elements of urban environment were examined by Kevin Lynch in *The Image of the City* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1960).

15. "Creating Your City's Image," Technical Bulletin (Washington, DC: National League of Cities, 1981), p. 9.

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the citizen's voice could stretch further and with more wisdom. For many, Italian plazas epitomize the values of civic humanism: places where citizens brush shoulders while performing the rituals of business and social life. Plazas display the architecture of *Sittlichkeit*, the communal values that bridge the family and corporate worlds.

In their study of European urban places, the Lennards discuss the "ethics" of public space. Free access promotes democratic values and acquaints us with those strange or foreign whose paths we are otherwise hesitant to cross. The varied encounters of plaza life teach us the rituals of sociability and the pleasures of unplanned moments and ritual celebrations. Finally, a recognition process transpires that broadens the repertoire of "behaviors, emotions, and relationships each is capable of. Those familiar from public spaces are less likely to be treated as objects, or in terms of a specific role function only, when subsequently encountered in one of the other realms of social life."[16] An important phase of socialization occurs in these "living rooms," where human dramas are played out and where a sense of community is stirred.

New public places in the US reflect the sophistication of consumer culture, not the animation of civil society. If Jacobs is correct, community life in American cities was enacted on streets and sidewalks, not plazas, parks or even playgrounds. Today sidewalks are often silent, big parks are in tatters, and friends meet at the mall. It is instructive to compare White's study of small urban spaces with the Lennards' book.[17] European places are used all day while New York plazas — an oasis for those working in the nearby towers — hum from 11 to 2. Children are rarely found in these concrete malls, whereas neighborhood life spills into the European plazas after the shops have closed. White's book was instrumental in reshaping New York zoning laws to enhance the hospitality of the plazas. Walls, steps, and ledges should be built for sitting, with benches, chairs, lighting, trees and drinking fountains required in new construction. Above all, zoning emphasizes street access to connect the open space with the pedestrian world around it. Consequently, the stinginess of the cement desert — where shade, seating, and water only come with the meal — diminishes. But like petticoats, these spaces add bounce to the workplace without really leaving it. Little physical space remains for the recognition process described by the Lennards or

16. Suzanne Crowhurst Lennard and Henry Lennard, *Public Life in Urban Places* (Southampton, NY: Gondolier, 1984), p. 19.

17. William Whyte, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (Washington, DC: Conservation Foundation, 1980).

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the trusting street presence that mediates the private and public extremes for Jacobs. The middle realm for enacting the rituals of civil society between the private and the corporate is disappearing. Where *do* the habits of the heart hang out these days?

A quick way to realize the changing nature of public space is to schedule a demonstration. Where do we encounter other citizens? A huge gathering in the park reaches a small audience unless TV news can use the event. If we exclude the media or billboard sabotage and refuse to march down the expressway median or onto the ballfield, then it is back to the federal building and the most leafletted office workers in the nation. Other places where people conduct their affairs are sanctuaries closed to politics. Shopping malls are private, and many downtown plazas, arcades, and atriums appear to be private although they are often funded publicly. The legal status of these hybrid indoor/outdoor and public/private spaces is not defined, so the exclusionary practices of management have not been tested. White argues that free access should be guaranteed in places *used* as public. "The public's right in urban plazas would seem clear. Not only are plazas used as public spaces, in most cases the owner has been specifically, and richly, rewarded for providing them. He has not been given the right to allow only those public activities he happens to approve of. He may assume he has, and some owners have been operating on this basis with impunity. But that is because nobody has challenged them . . . There is a principle involved, and inevitably it is going to be tested. The space was really provided by the public — through its zoning and planning machinery."[18] Guards patrol the entrances to the Trump Towers and building design often screens out the riffraff. Architects for the new Chicago public library want to designate the unused portion of the block for commercial purposes because a plaza would simply attract bag ladies, untalented musicians, and alcoholics. This hostility towards outsiders is reflected in the absence of seating in any of the often stunning lobbies of the big skyscrapers. Even the Rouse company, noted for its liberal viewpoint, filters controversy from the premises. The "peace and love" clown may entertain at Union Station as long as he's not wearing his "US out of Nicaragua" button.[19]

If the picket line is obsolete, it is not just because politics has vacated

18. Whyte, *op. cit.*, p. 65. The case for free access to indoor spaces is made by Suzanne Stephens, "The Market at Citicorp, New York City," *Progressive Architecture*, (December, 1978).

19. Reported by Jim McGinnis, Institute for the Study of Peace and Justice, St. Louis.

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physical spaces for the media: it is because most access to crowds is now subject to commercial restrictions, not constitutional protections. When the public gathers in protected spaces, then its activities are as controlled by management as storefronts or sculpture. Little is left to one's imagination; spontaneity suggests a category mistake. Writing a poem in Union Station is as difficult to conceive of as planting a soapbox on the premises. Possible experiences and emotions are mapped along with the rest of the building. Relaxation, titilation, nostalgia and distraction are acceptable moods, but complexity beyond visual design, e.g., the labor or racial strife that figured in railroad history, is prohibited. (Until stimulation must be intensified to provoke consumption, so that darker "themes" would become acceptable. Retail design has this certainty: it is inherently dynamic.)

While the piazza extends the living room life of Italians, new urban spaces are molded on the principles of television. Venturi's quip — "Americans don't need piazzas. They should be inside watching TV." — poses a false dilemma. Coaxed from our living room, we enter another frame of images. On this screen are arrayed visual signals where reality blends with unreality and we — passive viewers and hungry consumers — attend to the changing scene. In his perceptive piece "The Malling of America" Kowinski considers the socialization of a consumer, i. e., childhood spent in programmed spaces. "Prefabricated, highly defined space with separated functions is not the same as the organic chaos of a city or town, let alone the natural landscape, even if it's made to look like all of that. And in this sense, the mall is characteristic of the environment many of these kids now inhabit. Growing up, moving from home to school to the mall — from enclosure to enclosure, transported in cars — is a curiously continuous process, without much in the way of contrast or contact with unenclosed and unplanned reality. Places must tend to blur into one another. The mall is just an extension, say, of school — only there's Karmelkorn instead of chem lab, the ice rink instead of gym."[20]

What follows from continuously inhabiting spaces that have been figured out by somebody with a goal in mind? This space lacks secrets or hiding spots. Passivity is reinforced since there is nothing left for us to map; there is nothing left but lines on maps. And the psychological research brought to bear on design is growing. Endless animal studies about stress and overcrowding have made way for sophisticated insights

20. Kowinski, *New Times*.

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into loneliness, conviviality, the desire for connectedness. As the straight angles of a classroom speak of discipline and routine, these new environments mirror carefully what is absent from our lives.

The old malls looked like any place — only fancier. New public spaces often aspire to particularity; they want to belong to a community or a region. Union Station is laid out in neighborhoods where stories could be recounted and experiences might occur, e.g., lively family meals in the food courts, those fixtures of new public spaces. But these experiences can leave no marks on the place. Real particularity that would mediate the opposition between universal and individual, the impersonal and the personal, cannot be engineered from above by the universal. It must arise from the actions — necessarily incomplete — of reconciling these extremes by those involved. Rather than a picnic grove or high school cafeteria, the food court replicates the fast food strip, only now using ethnic franchises. Market strategies for reducing alienation tend to devise more sophisticated forms; in the name of a new humanism our capacities as *consumers* are rejuvenated.

Architecture, of all the arts, reflects the dominant class outlooks most faithfully because of the financing required. This symbiosis has so deepened that some speak of a crisis in the profession, of the architect as a glorified decorator with key structural decisions determined at the cash nexus.[21] With the field permeated with business concerns, it is not surprising that "the mixture of codes known as postmodernism"[22] signifies for many a major decline in the culture's residual autonomy. The populism advocated by Venturi in *Learning from Las Vegas* is epitomized in new corporate headquarters and signature skylines. Jameson calls postmodernism the dominant cultural logic of global capitalism.[23] Wolin speaks of the "proliferation of a cultural pseudo-democracy, with the substance of democracy remaining withheld."[24]

Connections between the preservation movement and the eclecticism and revivalism of the arts have been overlooked. Both burgeoned during the 1970s as neo-classical facades draped new structures while arches, porticos, domes, columns and round windows were restored to the old. Both identified a new populism with an unabashed commercial

21. See Diane Ghirardo's "Past or Post Modern in Architectural Fashion," *Telos* 62 (Winter 1984-85).

22. Andreas Huyssen's term in *After The Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, and Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

23. Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review* 146 (July/August, 1984).

24. Richard Wolin, "Modernism vs. Postmodernism," *Telos* 62, (Winter 1984-85).

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spirit, e.g., Venturi's regard for The Strip. Preservationists grew more aggressively commercial during this period, deriding the "museum" mentality that "mummifies things," e.g., earlier restorations like old Charleston. Marketing serves a vital civic function, according to the Rouse company, by generating affection for the city center. The economic benefits of putting your ruins back to work were heralded. Once an architectural backwater, specialties of "deducing" new functions from old forms gradually were being taught in the schools. "Conversion, not simply preservation," acknowledged the economic reality that made projects like Union Station possible. Not until Oppenheimer Properties selected it for the site of its new hotel did funding start to roll.

A convergence between renovation and postmodernism goes further. The mixed uses that give Union Station its "brimming with life" veneer mirror the eclecticism of the postmodern. Complexity, argued Venturi, honors the feeling of the real better than streamlined, simplified functions. A sense of bustle and the rhythm of the sidewalk are the lived equivalent of the *pastiche* trademark of the postmodern. The rebel of modernism comes to be replaced by the fashion-conscious crowd of the postmodern. Movements and discoveries are over; our task is new arrangements. Jameson defines *pastiche* as parody that has lost a sense of conviction or direction. Norms bring laughter to parody: a profusion of styles cannot generate the tension of critique or even humor. So parody becomes "blank." "For with the collapse of the high-modernist ideology of style — what is as unique and unmistakable as your own fingerprints, as incomparable as your own body — the producers of culture have nowhere to turn but to the past: the imitation of dead styles, speech through all the masks and voices stored up in the imaginary museum of a now global culture."[25]

For Jameson, the postmodern diverges most sharply from modernism in replacing the categories of time by the categories of space, the dynamic by the image. Acting within a historical continuum, e.g., revolts against mainstream ways, yields to historicism, the random citation of styles. The nostalgia that floods movies, dress, books, radio, politics does not concern the "past," rather they concern "pastness."[26] Desire for contact with another era can be quickly aroused with images. Books and museums deal in subtleties and demand too much work when only a quick dose of "pastness" is called for. These qualities of perception are

25. Jameson, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 67. Further consideration of the sentimental apppeal of nostalgia is called for. Why are these images so consoling or entertaining?

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linked by Neil Postman, among others, to the "television" mentality.

Like an Indian reservation, Union Station signifies to its visitors a time when things were "different" at a time when things feel like they'll never change. Here we enter a historical tableau from the timeless present when nothing moves except fashion on its slithering course. Critics like Jameson suggest a move from the diachronic to the synchronic with the postmodern. We do not *experience* old ways in daily life to contrast with the present; remnants are rapidly disappearing. Monuments, tombs and memorials cannot illumine the future with the sober lessons of the past if we do not believe anything vital ever changes. That this stoicism coexists with continual technological upheaval reflects an absence of political empowerment. The economy sustains constant flux; from life comes nothing. To maintain a range of human motivations, capitalism must recreate the lifeworld that has been undermined for so long. So we turn to the market for sensations of that which the market itself destroyed: tradition, spontaneity, neighborhood, bohemia, diversity, virtue, even the hearth. A feeling of community becomes a critical commodity in the marketplace. Since these realities are not easily created, classical empiricism returns as relevant; we passively experience a stream of disconnected percepts lacking fundamental bonds.

The waning of historical continuities is likened by Jameson to a schizophrenic breakdown in the signifying chain, to a "series of pure and unrelated presents in time."[27] Whether schizophrenia or narcissism more accurately describes our cultural symptoms is moot. More relevant is the reliance upon symbols for qualities no longer palpable from our activities but central to well-being, such as this feeling for context. Spaces like Union Station offer whiffs of history that momentarily deflect attention from the grinding present tense of our lives.

As substance dwindles, its symbolic representation must intensify. An example is the glorification of individuality during the slide into direct corporate rule. Ethnic identity is showcased by sons of millionaires as symbols of the durable and ordinary. Citing von Humboldt, John Stuart Mill emphasized that liberty could not exist without diversity of lifestyle, values and belief. There is no more visible sign of freedom than our differences quarreling; conflicts must be fabricated if they are not naturally sparked.[28] Mill blasted custom, community and human intolerance as the great foes of diversity; creeping commodification of

27. Jameson, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

28. Mill's views of quiescent culture should be measured against the artificial negativity thesis of Piccone, in *Telos* 35 (Spring, 1978).

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all aspects of life was less well understood. That differences appear as the condition of liberty is an insight of Mill's that still seems to hold. Diversity as a value must be symbolically represented for us to believe we are free. Along with voting and religion, commodity consumption is the activity usually cited as proof of our freedom. To be free means to spend my money as I choose. However, this diversity does not provoke the tensions on which individuality thrives. In Mill's view, the symbol is a placid substitute for the war of desires from which imagination and creativity emerge. A bit of appeasement while the real need starves.

Domination by images in modern culture is best depicted by Debord. Following Feuerbach's religious logic, the spectacle — product of capital in its most developed stage — shapes us into its likeness. Like money, spectacle is the universal equivalent into which all experiences finally pass. Not an inversion between reality and appearance, but appearance infiltrating the real, the fading of the distinction between them. Images are not only dreamed and viewed; they are entered and lived. Television most clearly shows perception and behavior tranquilized by the image, the colonization of inner life. But the spectacle cuts much deeper than concern about TV. In Debord's words: "everything that was directly lived has moved away into a representation."[29] "It (spectacle) occupies the main part of the time lived outside of modern production."[30] "It says nothing more than — that which appears is good, and that which is good appears."[31] "It expresses nothing more than modern society's desire to sleep."[32] "Its communication is essentially unilateral."[33] "It is the preservation of unconsciousness within the practical change of the conditions of existence."[34] An image unifies what actually remains separate — the stream of perceptions; hence, contemplating these series of false completions has both narcotic and hunger-producing effects. Something significant seemed to occur, but the gnawing quickly returns. As in Hegel's dialectic of desire, privation exists within the image's satisfaction, so appetite revives continually. The proliferating experiences of addiction in our lives replicate the behavior of the media. The image *is* the perfect commodity: devoured continuously because it cannot be possessed.

The turn within capitalism to the production of images follows from

29. Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit: Black and Red, 1983), #1.
30. *Ibid.*, #6.
31. *Ibid.*, #12.
32. *Ibid.*, #20.
33. *Ibid.*, #24.
34. *Ibid.*, #25.

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the "falling rate of use value." "Exchange value has ended up by directing use. The process of exchange became identified with all possible use and reduced use to the mercy of exchange. Exchange value is the *condottiere* of use value who ends up waging the war for himself."[35] The circuit that led from production to exchange to consumption is mired in exchange. Even after the home is purchased, it is the investment, not the dwelling, which is inhabited; costs counsel when we move, have children, etc. It is the price of the wedding dress, not any symbolic meanings, which gratifies. Our treasure comes exclusively to reside in money and the opportunities it buys. Even things are devalued in relation to their market value. Use-value, that wooden term for living outside the economic loops, falls in relation to exchange.

Leiss connects the falling rate of use value to the scale of commodification. Individuals are dwarfed by possessions which they do not understand, which often pose health risks, and which, given a shortage of time, are stored in their ware-houses. "The kind of knowledge that seems appropriate for judging the suitability of things in relation to the objectives of our needs is the knowledge that is applied in craft skills. Where this is not the case, consumer choices are largely a process of becoming acquainted with messages about commodities and arbitrarily choosing which to believe for the time being. One outstanding effect of the high-consumption lifestyle is to induce individuals to become more and more indifferent to each of their specific wants in proportion to the increasing amount of time and resources expended on the total activity of consumption."[36] In the fleeting life of commodities, particular things mean very little. The image — our Virgil — guides us past the uncertainties of desires, simplifies troubling dilemmas, bestows satisfaction. The spectacle arises when, for example, advertising is consumed and the actual product disappears into the pleasures of sporting designer logos.

A spectacle like Union Station takes image beyond packaging to environment. It achieves what Baudrillard calls simulation, an appearance that does not imitate, replace, or defame reality (like a counterfeit) but becomes itself the real or "hyperreal." A genuine *simulacrum* exists without a referent; appearances rule uncontested. Without other norms, Union Stations now signify urban life; they become the "nature" or reference for symbols of the city: melting pot, bustle, neighborhood, encounters, street action, the familiar, heritage. Civil society exists in

35. *Ibid.*, #46.

36. William Leiss, *The Limits of Satisfaction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 16.

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these imagings. "Hyperreal" describes their "undesignateable" quality — not overtly "entertainment" like Disneyland, not like a walk outside their walls. The distinction between reality and fiction must have already eroded substantially to permit the emergence of such space. "The collapse of reality into hyperrealism, in the minute duplication of the real, preferably on the basis of another reproductive medium — advertising, photo, etc. From medium to medium the real is volatilized; it becomes an allegory of death, but it is reinforced by its very destruction. Realism had already begun this tendency. The hyperreal represents a much more advanced phase, in the sense that even this contradiction between the real and the imaginary is effaced. The unreal is no longer that of dream or of fantasy, of a beyond or a within, it is that of a hallucinatory resemblance of the real with itself."[37]

But new urban spaces minister to our needs in ways ignored by the "hyperspace" designation. Personal integration is imaged in several ways. Many purposes are suggested at once: shopping, ogling, exercising, visiting, eating, in an edifying context. A place like Union Station is "overdetermined," partly to motivate consumption, but also to convey the luxury of time. Modern life means segregation of activities. Family, work, school, exercise, friendship, play, culture, and spirituality occupy separate zones between which we commute constantly. A bonus issues when these zones merge, since some disposable time is restored for our use. The lifeworld mimesis underway in capitalism today affects a sense of time — both in its historical and personal form. McDonald's clever strategy — combining play centers and fast food — was a precursor. In places that allow many things to happen together, urgency lessens and strolling is possible for a while. The real scarcity of time in our lives is masked through the design of these spaces.

The very abstract topics of time and space suggest basic splits in approaching civil society. Bluntly, more conservative concerns relate to space (at least urban, not rural) while progressive, i.e., nearly invisible, perspectives take up questions of time. The basic decency of equal access to housing, jobs, schools, political office, and healthcare has been accepted in principle by a broad spectrum. Debates about the work week, the quality of work, and the commodification of everyday life are virtually non-existent. Centers and tax-cuts for childcare may be mandated by law, but much more challenging is the struggle for time in which to raise children.

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37. Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations*, (New York: Semiotex[e], 1983), p. 142.

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Efforts to find "places" for public life continue in works by neo-conservatives such as Glaser.[38] Despite the ritual lambasting of modern architecture, a subtle continuity with the authors' arch-enemies is evident. Both utopian and neo-conservative authors trust the design of cities to foster desirable patterns of life. Behavior follows form, which follows function. The "complexity and contradiction" of public places are linked to the European qualities deemed lacking in our lives. But the middle between family and corporate worlds is more likely to arise from social and political movements than through engineering and design. And the presence of grassroots movements should be as visible on the streets as in the media. In the absence of genuine street life, as in the 1960s counterculture or the civil rights movement, only the spectacle of community is thriving.

38. Nathan Glaser and Mark Lilla, *The Public Face of Architecture* (New York: The Free Press, 1987).

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Symposium on Weber's *The Protestant Ethic*

*Protestantism and Capitalism: Weber's Thesis in Light of Recent Social History**

Richard van Dülmen

Max Weber's thesis concerning the relation between ascetic Protestantism and the capitalist spirit, first published in 1905, engendered a discussion among scholars that has continued until today.[1] Weber became internationally known beyond a narrow circle of specialists through this discussion. The reception of the thesis has been in no sense unanimous. It continues to differ according to scholarly interests, with the reactions of sociologists, historians, and specialists in religion being particularly illuminating. Until today, the thesis has been widely accepted in the more systematic-theoretical works of social scientists and has met with qualified approval by theologians and other specialists in religion. The reaction of historians has been very heterogeneous, if not conspicuously polemical. But the critical debate has not negated the significance of the thesis. From the beginning, it had direct research relevance for all scholars either generally or specifically concerned with the reconstruction of the genesis of modernity, who were either guided by a special interest in the role of religion in history or viewed the breakthrough of capitalism as the decisive transformative factor of social development.[2]

The debate on the Weber thesis, which unfortunately has been all too often

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* Originally published in *Max Weber. Ein Symposion*, ed. by Christian Gneuss and Jürgen Kocka (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1988), pp. 88-101. Trans. and ed. by G. L. Ulmen.

1. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, tr. by Talcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958).

2. Among others, see: Constans Seyfarth and Walter M. Sprondel, eds., *Seminar: Religion und gesellschaftliche Entwicklung. Studien zur Protestantismus-Kapitalismus-These Max Webers* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1973); S.N. Eisenstadt, *Produktion, Wandel und Modernität* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1979); Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 2 vols. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986); Richard Münch, *Die Kultur der Moderne*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1986).

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only a dispute concerning the correct understanding of it, would have certainly remained a purely academic matter had it not, on the one hand, touched so closely on the cultural self-understanding of the prewar period and, on the other, propagated a historical understanding that became politically relevant for the bourgeoisie. Even though Weber was not promoting any "idealist" conception of history, [3] his work (*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* in the forefront) was taken as a congenial bourgeois answer to the theoretical-intellectual challenge of Karl Marx, even as a refutation of historical materialism. It is certainly true that, had Weber's book remained isolated, it would not have achieved intellectual significance beyond the discussion that immediately followed its apearance. Weber not only presented his investigation as the first in a series of studies on the sociology of religion seeking to thematize the relation between religion and economy generally and world-historically, but as a paradigm of modern social science dedicated to the genesis of modern culture, whereby the intrinsic value of the "Protestant ethic" soon became more relevant than the "narrower" thesis.[4] The significance of the thesis and its "reception" in the cultural and social sciences can thus only be properly evaluated if one considers it in the context of the intellectual-scientific discussion in Germany prior to WWI, and as a key to understanding Weber's general interest in Western rationalism.[5]

Weber did not tackle any new problems in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. On the contrary, when he began in 1904 — immediately after the publication of his no less pioneering study of " 'Objectivity' in Social Science and Social Policy"[6] — the discussion concerning the origin of capitalism, also concerning the cultural significance of Protestantism and even of modern rational culture, was in full bloom, although he had never before treated problems of the sociology of religion. A trip to America, which interrupted the investigation, strengthened Weber's view of the genesis of the capitalist spirit. The approximately 160-page work then appeared in two parts in 1905 in the journal he coedited.[7] On April 2, 1905, Weber wrote to an old family friend, Heinrich Rickert: "In June or July you will receive an essay on cultural history that may be of interest to you: Protestant asceticism as the foundation

3. Cf. Jürgen Kocka, ed., *Max Weber, der Historiker* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986).

4. Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, 3 Vols. (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1920/21). In addition to *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, *op. cit.*, see *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism*, tr. and ed. by Hans H. Gerth (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1951); *The Religion of India: The Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism*, tr. and ed. by Hans H. Gerth and Don Martindale (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1958); and *Ancient Judaism*, tr. and ed. by Hans H. Gerth and Don Martindale (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1952).

5. Paul Münch, "Welcher Zusammenhang besteht zwischen Konfession und ökonomischem Verhalten? Max Webers These im Lichte der historischen Forschung," *Der Bürger im Staat*, No. 34 (1984), pp. 108-113.

6. [Tr.] see Max Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, tr. and ed. by Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch (New York: The Free Press, 1949), pp. 49-112.

7. *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, vol. 20 (1904), pp. 1-54; vol. 21 (1905), pp. 1-110.

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of modern *vocational civilization* [*Berufskultur*] — a sort of 'spiritualistic' construction of modern economy."[8]

Scarcely could an investigation have been more ambitious, and Weber could scarcely have formulated his interest more clearly. What intrigued him was not the fact of a connection between Protestantism and capitalism, i.e., the influence of Calvinism on the development of modern capitalism as such, as had been earlier formulated by Gothein[9] and Sombart.[10] His driving interest was concentrated exclusively on the question of *how* this connection could be more precisely conceived and reconstructed. What was fundamentally new in Weber's thesis lay in this dimension; the intellectual dynamic is found in this concerted effort.

Before the core tenets are considered, it is necessary to deal with the debates in which Weber's thesis developed. Only in this way is it possible to avoid misunderstandings and to apprehend the complex nature of the explanation.

Weber first establishes three facts in view of the problem posed. In their general outlines, they are well-known; but they are buttressed with new evidence and presented with great intellectual display in a universal context.

1. Since the 16th century, the most economically developed countries — Western Europe and later America, and within these the most economically advanced bourgeois middle classes — had linked up with the Reformation, or better Calvinism, whereby still at the end of the 19th century the ownership of capital and entrepreneurship was proportionally higher among Protestants. From this he concluded a specific inclination of Protestants to "economic rationalism." To be sure, this expressed more their "enduring intrinsic peculiarity" than the historical-political situation of confessions; and "If we want to find an intrinsic relation between particular characteristics of the early Protestant spirit and modern capitalist culture, we must not seek this in more or less materialistic or anti-ascetic "worldly joy" [*Weltfreude*], but much more in their purely religious impulses." Economic rationalism expressed particular consequences of Calvinism.

2. The essential expansive impulse of modern capitalism was constituted, among other things, not only from capitalistically negotiable cash reserves but from the development of the so-called capitalist spirit. As the behavior of Benjamin Franklin demonstrated, which Weber took to be paradigmatic, the new spirit of capitalism was not derived from a materialistic search for profit

8. Cited in Marianne Weber, *Max Weber: A Biography*, tr. and ed. by Harry Zohn, with a new Introduction by Guenther Roth (New Brunswick, NJ and Oxford: Transaction Books, 1988), p. 356.

9. Eberhard Gothein, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Schwarzwaldes und der angrenzenden Landschaften* (Strassburg: K.J. Trübner, 1892).

10. Werner Sombart, *Der moderne Kapitalismus: Historisch-systematische Darstellung des gesamteuropäischen Wirtschaftsleben von seinen Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich and Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1902).

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(which has existed always and everywhere) but alone from an "ethically tinged conduct of life" — a maxim by which the human being is no longer oriented to acquisition as a means to satisfy his material needs but as a purpose in life, an end in itself. Of course, later on the subjective adoption of this ethical maxim no longer played any role. But at the beginning this type of conduct and vocational conception conformed to the peculiarity of capitalism.

3. This more or less ascetic vocational understanding is again ascribed to Protestantism — to the Protestant ethic. The fulfillment of duty in a worldly vocation is first conceived "as the highest attribute moral self-motivation could in general achieve during the Reformation." For Weber, Luther's concept of vocation played less a role (remaining strongly traditional), than did the vocational understanding of West European Calvinism and the Protestant sects associated with it in countries with the most progressive economic development. Although this consequence was not in the reformers' interests, an investigation of the relations between the Protestant ethic and the development of the capitalist spirit must proceed from Calvin's thinking to Calvinism and the Protestant sects. Weber did not mean, however, that the origins of capitalism were to be found here.

Weber spoke of a foolish and doctrinaire thesis that the "spirit" of capitalism could only have arisen as the result of certain effects of the Reformation, or even that capitalism as an economic system could be conceived as a product of the Reformation. This he categorically rejected; it was for him no causal relation. His investigation only asked, as he expressly stated: "whether and to what extent religious forces have taken part in the qualitative formation and the quantitative expansion of that spirit over the world. Furthermore, what concrete aspects of our capitalistic culture can be traced to them."[11] He did not attempt anything more or less than to demonstrate a particular "elective affinity" between certain forms of religious belief and the vocational ethic he sought to more clearly define and explain in the second part of his investigation.

Weber also approached this task from two different directions. To begin with, he analyzed the religious foundations of so-called inner-worldly asceticism, in terms of which he defined the outlooks of Calvinism and Pietism, Methodism and Sectarianism. Thus he did not concern himself in general with moral praxis, also not with official dogma, but concentrated only on the practical consequences, i.e., on the investigation and "determination of those psychological impulses created by religious beliefs and the practice of religious life," which, as Weber said at a decisive point, "gave a direction to practical conduct and held the individual to it."[12] The core of the outlook of Calvinism was the theory of predestination, according to which the individual cannot save himself with the support of any particular means or even know if he belongs to

11. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, *op.cit.*, p. 91.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

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the chosen. A Calvinist does not strive for personal salvation, for there is nothing he can do; he is commanded to express in his life and purpose continuous service to the glory of God through "the social structure of life." Put another way: "The God of Calvinism demanded of his believers not single good works," as in Catholicism, but "a life of good works combined into a unified system,"[13] which resulted in a rigorous systematization of ethical conduct and presupposed a methodical regimentation of life. Weber conceived this regimentation as "a systematic method of rational conduct,"[14] under the already noted concept of inner-worldly asceticism. Different from monastic-Catholic asceticism, which withdrew from everyday life, Calvinist-Protestant asceticism demanded the proving of belief in the mundane world, in a worldly vocation. Precisely because ascetic Protestantism could not guarantee personal salvation by any magic-sacramental means, also not through the exoneration of confession or the accumulation of individual good works, the compulsion to prove one's faith in a secular world led to "an incentive methodically to supervise his own state of grace in his own conduct, and thus to penetrate it with asceticism." In short: "This rationalization of conduct in the world, but for the sake of the world beyond, was the consequence of the concept of calling of ascetic Protestantism."[15]

After Weber had discovered the rational formative will of the here and now as the chief characteristic of the "religious" vocational ethic of Protestantism, he thematized at the end of his monograph the connections between this Puritan concept of vocation, of inner-worldly asceticism as the commission of God, with the maxims of everyday economic life, the spirit of capitalism. After having established the religious foundation of asceticism through an analysis of the theology of Calvinism, he sought to illustrate this relation with writings concerned above all with pastoral praxis. As much as possible, he utilized texts concerned with praxis. The work of the Anglican, Richard Baxter, who was as much opposed to unabashed striving for worldly goods as to instinctive avarice, nevertheless approved the pursuit of profit as not only sanctioned but willed by God. Thus he created the preconditions for the revaluation of the new bourgeois profit motive: "The religious valuation of restless, continuous, systematic work in a worldly calling, as the highest means to asceticism, and at the same time the surest and most evident proof of rebirth and genuine faith, must have been the most powerful conceivable lever for the expansion of that attitude toward life which we have here called the spirit of capitalism."[16] More than almost any other tendency, the Puritan conduct of life accomodated the economic, rational conduct of life; it was its "most essential and above all its only consistent bearer."

13. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 153 f.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 172.

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Before it reached a decisive turn with the origin of the modern *homo oeconomicus*, the estimation of economic action had to be emancipated from its religious origins. "The full economic effect of those great religious movements . . . generally came only after the peak of the purely religious enthusiasm was past. Then the intensity of the search for the Kingdom of God commenced gradually to pass over into sober economic virtue."[17] The Protestant ethic only played a role in its beginnings.

To the extent that the main effect of the Protestant ethic led to the formation of a rational conduct of life on the basis of an idea of vocation derived from the spirit of inner-worldly asceticism, it was a constitutive part of the modern capitalist spirit. "For when asceticism was carried out of monastic cells into everyday life, and began to dominate worldly morality, it did its part in building the tremendous cosmos of the modern economic order. This order is now bound to the technical and economic conditions of machine production which today determines the lives of all the individuals who are born into this mechanism, not only those directly concerned with economic acquisition, with irresistible force."[18] This is as far as the argument goes in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

Despite the express limitations of the problem posed in Weber's study, which he clearly emphasized, it had a remarkable impact beyond narrow professional boundaries and even outside the scholarly world. The reason for this was not only the relevance of Weber's question, but above all the methodological-theoretical assertions and the evidence thereto that *in nuce* anticipated Weber's whole *oeuvre* and became the foundation of modern social science. What was epoch-making in this *oeuvre* is found in four areas:

The first relates directly to Weber's question and the answer he gives concerning the influence of the Protestant ethic on the spirit of capitalism. The specific character of the modern rational-capitalistic vocational ethos was decisively determined by ascetic Protestantism, which accounts for why the expansion of modern capitalism occurred only in the West.

Secondly, with the publication of *The Protestant Ethic* Weber founded the sociology of religion in Germany by thematizing the relation between religion and economy and placing religion and social development in a universal-historical context. Of course, this dimension is still not completely drawn out in *The Protestant Ethic*; it constitutes, however, the intellectual opening to "The Economic Ethics of the World Religions,"[19] which he began immediately following completion of *The Protestant Ethic*.[20]

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17. *Ibid.*, p. 176.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 181.
19. See *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, tr., ed., and with an Introduction by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 267-301.
20. See the section on "Religious Groups (The Sociology of Religion)," in Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, 2 Vols., ed. by Guenther

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Thirdly, Weber established with this study the "ideal-typical" method in the social sciences, which does not operate with the evidence of individual empirical facts but with structural insights which, free of moral value-judgments, demonstrate objective interconnections. When Weber compared Protestantism with Catholicism, he consciously rejected any moral valuation because this comparison did not concern the individual significance of religion, but rather the genesis of modern rationality. Thus the Protestant Weber provided starting points for a history of the mentality of Catholics and Protestants still valuable today.

Finally, Weber achieved with this pioneering work an epoch-making contribution to how ideas become historically relevant, how ideas can influence historical-social processes. However, in no sense did he become thereby an advocate of an idealistic conception of history. On the contrary: "Modern man is in general, even with the best will, unable to recognize the great significance that religious ideas once had for conduct, culture and national character. But it is, of course, not my aim to substitute for a one-sided materialistic an equally one-sided spiritualistic causal interpretation of culture and history. Each is equally possible, but each, if it does not serve as a preparation, but as the conclusion of an investigation, accomplishes equally little in the interest of historical truth."[21] Such is the conclusion of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Weber cannot be claimed for one or the other historical conception. He did not concern himself with causalities but rather with affinities among social factors and processes in history.

The fact that this study, this construction of a connection between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism, was not recognized in its full significance with its appearance in 1905 is not surprising.[22] It was too complex and in its form of presentation too idiosyncratic and novel. Still, its resonance was quite remarkable. There was scarcely a political economist or historian that did not take a position on it. The most well-known are the great critical contributions of Karl Fischer and Felix Rachfahl, which Weber himself answered in various replies.[23] The significance of these is paramount, because Weber here both expands his position and makes it more precise. He found the strongest support in his friend, the renowned student of religion, Ernst Troeltsch, who independently of Weber and in different ways had come to similar conclusions.[24] The

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Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 399-634.

21. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic*, *op. cit.*, p. 183 (translation altered).

22. See in general Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus. Eine analytische und vergleichende Darstellung* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1971); Reinhard Bendix, *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1960).

23. Reprinted in Weber, *Die Protestantische Ethik. II: Kritiken und Antikritiken*, *op.cit.*

24. Ernst Troeltsch, "Die Kulturbedeutung des Calvinismus" (1910), in *Ibid.*, pp. 188-215.

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first criticisms of Weber were in the last analysis based on misunderstandings.

Although at the outset Weber repeatedly stressed he did not seek to derive capitalism from Calvinism and represented no idealistic position, he was immediately reproached on both counts. Today these misunderstandings appear inconceivable; but for his contemporaries there were obviously still significant difficulties in coming to terms with his posing of the problem and above all with his methodological-theoretical approach, which only became clear after the successive appearance and spread of his writings, especially of the posthumous works. Of course, the misunderstandings did not die with him.

Following the publication of *The Protestant Ethic*, Weber not only refined his position in various articles but, on the basis of his new insights, undertook a large-scale sociology of religion under the title, "The Economic Ethics of the World Religions," which he first published in articles. Only after the conclusion of these studies did he begin a reworking of *The Protestant Ethic*, which, together with other investigations in the sociology of religion, he reissued as a book.[25] Certainly the great controversy raised by the second edition of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, irrespective of its voluminous technical apparatus, was not essentially different from the first, although it acquired a different significance in that it appeared together with and in the context of Weber's " Economic Ethics of the World Religions." For the first time it became clear that his essential interest was not primarily in an analysis of capitalism, but much more in the history of Occidental rationalism, the foundation of modern culture. However, to others, the one-sidedness of Weber's early posing of the problem also became clear; the question concerning the significance of religion for the spirit of capitalism was expanded by the question concerning the significance of economic factors for religion. Ultimately, *The Protestant Ethic* was to be expanded by an investigation of the social development of Europe to the Reformation, with specific reference to the history of the bourgeoisie. But Weber did not live to return to it.

The publication of Weber's collected essays on the sociology of religion,[26] then also of *Economy and Society*, provided in the 1920s a broader basis for the evaluation and differentiation of his Calvinism-capitalism thesis than existed in 1905. However, despite this improved situation, which should have prevented any further misunderstandings, the reception of Weber's thesis did not significantly change. With the establishment of sociology as an independent faculty in universities, Weber's interpretation (to be sure, in simplified form) was canonized. However, particularly in the history of religion and sociology of religion, this resulted in a highly productive adoption and elucidation of the capitalism-Calvinism thesis. Since the 1930s, there has scarcely been an investigation in the sociology of religion that has not been decisively indebted

25. See Wolfgang Schluchter, *The Rise of Western Rationalism: Max Weber's Developmental History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 139 ff.

26. See note 4.

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to Weber's study.[27] This positive influence has extended, for example, also to questions of the history of religion in the historical profession proper. Research on sects, which has seen a remarkable development since the 1960s, has Weber to thank, as does research in other areas. However, different from the more systematically interested specialists in religion, the fraternity of ecclesiastical historians as well as mainline historians have remained unaffected by the Calvinism-capitalism discussion. This is not only explained by the fact that interest in the history of capitalism, also the history of Protestantism in connection with the origin of modernity, has since the 1920s, (above all in Germany) declined rapidly, even as social and economic history have been established as an independent discipline. For the most part, this reflects the decisive turn of historians to positivism, and the dominant interest in political and intellectual history. This does not mean that historians were ignorant of Weber and his contribution to a historical social science; only that those specialists concerned with the history of early capitalism and early Protestantism demonstrated no understanding of Weber's historical problem and method.

Otto Hintze, one of the great German social historians and a knowledgeable student of Weber's *oeuvre*, wrote upon the appearance of Weber's *Religionssoziologie* in 1922: "Despite the objections raised against it, the thesis concerning the influence of the ethic of ascetic Protestantism on the spirit of modern capitalism, which is the starting-point of this whole series of studies, can, if properly undertstood, be considered a scientific certainty."[28] By contrast, in 1967 the economic historian, Herbert Lüthy, had this to say: "How can the conduct of churches with respect to the praxis of social life generally and systematically be compared, when casuistry in the course of time or even at the same time allows completely contradictory bearings and the ultimate impossibility of connecting moral exhortations and religious tracts with praxis is all too obvious? And on the basis of which insights and sources should the historian articulate the religious convictions and conflicts of conscience of businessmen, of which there are at best a few surviving exchanges of correspondence and fragments of ledgers? Whoever is familiar with the difficulties of documentation can only be amazed at the sovereignty with which many pioneers

27. See, among others, Paul Honigsheim, *Die Staats- und Soziallehren der französischen Jansenisten im 17. Jahrhundert* [1914] (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchhandlung, 1969); R.H.Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1926); Claus-Peter Clasen, *Die Wiedertäufer im Herzogtum Württemberg und in benachbarten Herrschaften. Ausbreitung, Geisteswelt und Soziologie* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1965); Gerhard Lenski, *Religion und Realität. Eine Untersuchung über den Stellenwert der Religion in einer Industrie- grossstadt* (Cologne: Grote Verlag, 1967); Hans G. Kippenberg, "Wege zu einer historischen Religionssoziologie," in *Verkündigung und Forschung* (1971), pp. 54-82; Richard van Dülmen, "The History of Relgion as Social Science," in *Telos*, No. 58 (Winter 1983-84), pp. 20-29.

28. Otto Hintze, *Soziologie und Geschichte. Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur Soziologie, Politik und Theorie der Geschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964), p. 129.

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of historical sociology presume to know the spirit, convictions and beliefs of men, of whom they scarcely know the names and surnames. Precisely in this area, real havoc has been caused by the 'method of the ideal-type,' against which dangers Max Weber himself warned."[29] Aside from this nod in Weber's direction, Lüthy is as far from Weber's position as Weber's early critics. The Reformation specialist, Geoffrey R. Elton, is even more sweeping in his judgments, expressed at the 1971 Weber discussion: "The attraction of the universalizing generalization has, as so often, proved too much for the sceptical spirits which alone saves the historian from falling into the pitfalls dug by his own, very necessary, imagination. In the face of the long and ramifying controversy, sadness is the only proper feeling: sadness at so much misguided effort, and sadness at the willingness of historians to worship the graven images set up by the sociologist."[30]

These substantial reservations with respect to Weber's thesis have been abandoned since the 1970s. In the search for new approaches to the relation between religion and society, above all religion, culture and capitalism, Weber's thesis continues to be vigorously discussed, although no new productive starting-points have taken up his initial ideas in all their fullness. No doubt today we see individual factors differently; no longer value Luther's conception of vocation so highly; distinguish Calvin's theology from Calvinism in important ways; see no direct connection any more between the active bearers of early capitalism and the propagandists of an ascetic Protestantism; and in general make more distinctions within the Calvinist-Puritan tradition and weigh the Catholic contribution to modernism differently. Yet Weber's thesis is therewith not directly met, since he was primarily concerned with an analysis of the origin of the modern spirit not as an intellectual construction, but as a behavioral articulation. Now that the historians have become increasingly receptive to questions of cultural history and the history of *mentalité*, the question of the form of perception, disposition of behavior, and mentality in history has new relevance. Weber's thesis has until today direct relevance not as an empirical contribution to the history of Calvinism or capitalism, but to the history of social action and the role of ideas, i.e., religion in history. In this sense, Max Weber stands nearer to modern questions than Karl Marx.

29. Cf. Seyfarth and Sprondel, *Seminar: Religion und gesellschaftliche Entwicklung*, *op.cit.*, pp. 99 ff.

30. Geoffrey Rudolph Elton, *Reformation Europe, 1517-1559*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 318.

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Farewell to The Protestant Ethic?

Guy Oakes

Weber once observed that it is the fate of any piece of scientific research or scholarship to become antiquated within fifty years of its production. Pellicani has recently argued that this fate is long overdue for Weber's most celebrated and widely read work: *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.[1] Is it time to bid farewell to *The Protestant Ethic*? In the ensuing, I examine the case Pellicani makes for this position. In section (I), I provide a brief reconstruction of the two arguments he employs against Weber's conception of the relation between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism. In sections (II) and (III), I assess these arguments. My general strategy is twofold. I contend that Pellicani's arguments are nullified by several critical errors: they misconceive Weber's own position; they ignore essential distinctions and qualifications he introduces; and, perhaps most importantly, they fail to take into account central doctrines of his historiography. For these reasons, Pellicani's critique of Weber collapses. I also hold that his charges can generally be refuted on the basis of materials with which Weber himself provides us — not intimations or digressions drawn from his voluminous writings in other areas, but premises that can be found in his work on the Protestant ethic.

I

Weber's writings on the relation between Protestantism and capitalism fall into three groups of texts. First and most important, there are the two essays on the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism.[2] Second, there is Weber's analysis of American Protestant sects.[3] This analysis develops an argument

1. See his "Weber and the Myth of Calvinism," *Telos* 75 (Spring, 1988), pp. 57-85 and *Saggio sulla genesi del capitalismo. Alle origini della Modernità* (Milan: SugarCo, 1988).

2. "Die protestantische Ethik und der 'Geist' des Kapitalismus, I," written in the summer of 1904 shortly before Weber's journey to the United States and published in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, vol. 20 (1904), pp. 1- 54; and "Die protestantische Ethik und der 'Geist' des Kapitalismus, II," written in early 1905 after Weber's return from the United States and published in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, vol. 21 (1905), pp. 1-110. Weber's revised version of these essays, expanded by the addition of new notes, is published in his *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, I (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1920). The English translation — *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. by Talcott Parsons (New York: Scribner's, 1958 [1930]) employs the 1920 version of the essays.

3. "'Kirchen' und 'Sekten' I," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, April 13, 1906 and " 'Kirchen'

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linking the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism that is independent of the argument developed in *The Protestant Ethic*. Finally, there are the polemical articles Weber wrote in response to early criticisms of *The Protestant Ethic* by the historians H. Karl Fischer and Felix Rachfahl.[4] Here Weber clarifies the intentions and the problematic that underpin his two original essays and also disposes of various errors he ascribes to his critics. Pellicani concentrates exclusively on *The Protestant Ethic*, ignoring both Weber's Protestant sects analysis and his replies to criticisms.

In the notes to the revised edition of *The Protestant Ethic* and especially in his replies to Fischer and Rachfahl, Weber answers various criticisms of the argument developed in his two original essays. Two of these criticisms have been repeated with some frequency in the massive secondary literature on *The Protestant Ethic*. One objection holds that the mentality Weber calls the spirit of capitalism antedates the development of Protestantism. However, in any causal explanation, the cause must precede the effect. The phenomenon identified in the *explanans* must precede the phenomenon identified in the *explanandum*. Since Weber's explanation fails to satisfy this elementary requirement of all causal explanations, it is unacceptable. The other objection maintains that the ethical teachings of the reformed sects that Weber calls the Protestant ethic explicitly and overwhelmingly repudiate the spirit of capitalism. In consequence, the former cannot possibly account for the latter.

In defending the first objection, Pellicani claims that the spirit of capitalism can be identified in both the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. He ascribes considerable importance to Henri Pirenne's account of the career of the 11th

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und 'Sekten' II," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, April 14, 1906. A somewhat longer version of this essay was published as "'Kirchen' und 'Sekten' in Nordamerika," *Die Christliche Welt*, vol. 20 (1906), pp. 558-62, 577-83. A more thoroughly revised and considerably expanded version was published as "Die protestantischen Sekten und der Geist des Kapitalismus" in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* I, *op. cit.*, The *Christliche Welt* text of " 'Kirchen' und 'Sekten' " has been translated by Colin Loader; " 'Churches' and 'Sects' in North America," *Sociological Theory* vol. 3 (1985). pp. 7-13. "Die protestantischen Sekten und der Geist des Kapitalismus" is translated as "The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism," pp. 302-22 in H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills eds., *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958).

4. For Weber's replies to Fischer, see "Kritische Bemerkungen zu den vorstehenden 'Kritischen Beiträgen'," *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, vol. 25 (1907), pp. 243-49; and "Bemerkungen zu der vorstehenden 'Replik'," *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, vol. 26 (1908), pp. 275-83. For his more intemperate and occasionally exasperated replies to Rachfahl, see "Antikritisches zum 'Geist' des Kapitalismus," *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, vol. 30 (1910), pp. 176-202 and "Antikritisches Schlusswort zum 'Geist des Kapitalismus'," *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, vol. 31 (1910). pp. 554-99. All four articles together with the original criticisms of Fischer and Rachfahl are reprinted in Johannes Winckelmann ed., *Die protestantische Ethik II: Kritiken und Antikritiken* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1978). Of Weber's four responses, only the second half of the final article is available in English: "Anticritical last word on 'the spirit of capitalism'," tr. Wallace M. Davis, *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 83 (1978, pp. 1105-1131.

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century Lincolnshire merchant Godric of Finchale, whose commercial practices are said to be "emblematic" of the spirit of capitalism. Godric's "commercial instinct," the "search for profit" that directs his "every action," the use of money "to fuel and extend his trade," the employment of profit to increase circulating capital, the attempt to maximize profit without regard for moral scruples and the Church's condemnation of commercial speculation are said to constitute proof of a pre-Protestant spirit of capitalism.[5] Thus Pellicani concludes that the spirit of capitalism is not only much older than Weber believed, but that it "developed in an environment pervaded by Catholicism." [6] In making a case for the Renaissance roots of the spirit of capitalism, Pellicani appeals to the ideals of the *quattrocento*, which celebrate man as a creator. By mastering and transforming the world in commerce and industry, "man builds his destiny" and thereby embellishes life.[7] In defending the second objection, Pellicani makes use of the following evidence: Luther's repudiation of the acquisitive spirit and his critique of commerce as a surrender to Mammon; Calvin's condemnation of ambition and greed; the attack of 17th century English Puritanism on the pursuit of wealth and the orientation of life toward the things of this world; the critique of the profit-oriented commercial mentality by the New England Puritans of the 17th century; John Wesley's fulminations against money and wealth in the 18th century; and the denunciation of the love of money and Mammon by Richard Baxter, Weber's paradigmatic Puritan divine.[8]

According to Pellicani, this evidence demonstrates that Weber's conception of the relation between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism is a historical fantasy. Calvinism "had no positive function in the development of the entrepreneurial spirit."[9] On the contrary, together with counter-reformation Catholicism, "it represented the strongest attempt at halting Europe's advance towards a modern, capitalist, bourgeois civilization." The conclusion, Pellicani claims, is self-evident. "*The Protestant Ethic* is of no help in resolving the mystery of the birth of capitalism, nor does it contribute to even identifying factors which stimulated the development of the entrepreneurial spirit."[10]

What are the merits of these arguments?

II

Consider the claim that the spirit of capitalism can be identified before the

5. Pellicani, "Weber and the Myth of Calvinism," op.cit., pp. 57-58.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 61. For earlier versions of this argument, see H.M. Robertson, *Aspects of the Rise of Economic Individualism: A Critique of Max Weber and his School* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1935) and Werner Sombart, *The Quintessence of Capitalism* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1967 [1913]).
8. For earlier versions of this argument, see Kurt Samuelsson, *Religion and Economic Action* (London: Heinemann, 1961) and Robert W. Green ed., *Protestantism and Capitalism: the Weber Thesis and its Critics* (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1965).
9. Pellicani, "Weber and the Myth of Calvinism," *op. cit.*, p. 73.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

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development of the Protestant ethic. Weber himself disposes of this charge by means of two independent considerations. The first demonstrates that there are definitive differences between the ethos of the "economic supermen" of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, on the one hand, and the spirit of capitalism, on the other. The second argues that the spirit of capitalism was characteristic of a type of personality that was possible only on the basis of psychological sanctions and moral premiums generated by the Protestant ethic.

Weber identifies several essential differences between the spirit of capitalism and the commercial ethos of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The economic superman of the pre-Protestant era is an adventurer for whom capitalistic acquisition is an expression of his own will to power, a celebration of unfettered energies that drives him to master material and human resources for the purpose of unlimited financial gain. The commercial life of such an adventurer is episodic and governed by the principle of maximizing profits through maximizing risks. The only acknowledged rule is to achieve the highest returns possible by means of daring and potentially lucrative gambles. The spirit of capitalism, on the other hand, requires commitment to a sober and deliberate conduct of business. Capitalistic acquisition does not express the personal powers and passions of the businessman. It is rather grounded in an ethical calling that entails the obligation to build and safeguard an enterprise. The conduct of this enterprise depends upon factors that require the subordination, even the repression, of the businessman's will: a life of regular, continuous, and unremitting labor. Profit is maximized by means of industry and prudence, vigilance in keeping accounts, and timeliness in the repayment of debts, all of which are intended to demonstrate credit worthiness and general commercial reliability. Maximum returns are achieved by minimizing risks, analyzing carefully each step in every transaction, and calculating the possibilities of loss or gain.

The economic superman is motivated by greed, the passion for wealth, the *auri sacra fames* of the Dutch sea-captain who "would go through hell for gain even though he scorched his sails."[11] The businessman governed by the spirit of capitalism is not driven by greed or the lust for money, but by the duty to increase the holdings of the enterprise for which he bears the responsibility. Uninhibited risks and unrestrained speculations are replaced by investment decisions controlled by strategies of rational calculation.

For the economic superman, the aim of business is money, which is always conceived as personal wealth. Whether employed for consumption or as a means to further accumulation, wealth is the purely personal possession and prerogative of the entrepreneur, a manifestation of his powers, a means to satisfy his creature comforts and aesthetic delights, or a way to acquire further riches. In radical opposition to this attitude, the spirit of capitalism conceives money not as personal wealth, but as an object of stewardship. Money is capital,

11. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, *op.cit.*, p. 57.

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which must be saved, accumulated, and invested for purposes that are independent of the person of the entrepreneur and frequently inconsistent with his own passions, desires, and creaturely well being. Because the entrepreneur is only the trustee and not the possessor of money, funds are invested not in the entrepreneur himself, but in the enterprise.[12]

Finally, from a moral standpoint the economic superman is unscrupulous and opportunistic. Because of his absolute ruthlessness, moral considerations have no bearing on his conduct of business. This is why Weber argues that the mentality of the capitalist adventurer is repudiated as morally illegitimate and reprehensible or, at best, is tolerated as ethically indifferent because of its alleged economic indispensability. The spirit of capitalism, on the other hand, is ethically legitimated on the grounds of what Weber calls a positive moral sanction. The form of life it enjoins is not merely tolerated on grounds of expedience, but is "considered the essence of moral conduct, even commanded in the name of duty."[13]

In light of these considerations, let us return to the account of Godric of Finchale that Pellicani draws from Henri Pirenne's classic *Medieval Cities*. In fact, Pellicani tells us only part of the story of Godric's meteoric commercial career. Pirenne characterizes Godric as a merchant adventurer motivated by a passion for money. Starting with nothing, Godric was able to achieve a considerable fortune in a relatively short time because of his willingness to assume colossal risks and venture large sums in hazardous undertakings. On the one hand, this commercial ethos is grounded in a conscience unencumbered by religious and moral scruples. On the other hand, this same conscience was tormented by the fear that a life of avarice and greed would lead to the eternal damnation of the soul. The result was an inner struggle waged in the soul of the type of merchant exemplified by Godric, "torn between the irresistible seductions of wealth and the austere prescriptions of religious morality which their profession obliged them, in spite of their veneration, to violate unceasingly."[14] Godric resolved this conflict between the commercial ethos of the unprincipled speculator and the economic ethic of Roman Catholicism not merely by returning to the arms of the Church, but by exercising the extravagant penitence of a religious virtuoso. After becoming a very rich man, he is said to have suddenly abandoned the life of commerce, donated his goods to the poor, and taken up the life of a hermit,[15] for which exemplary sacrifice he was subsequently canonized as St. Godric of Finchale.

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12. See *Ibid.*, pp. 53, 70-71, 170, 195-196 and Weber in Winckelmann ed., *Die protestantische Ethik II*, *op.cit.*, pp. 176, 295. See also Poggi's useful discussion of the respects in which the identity and interests of the enterprise are independent of the person of the entrepreneur in Gianfranco Poggi, *Calvinism and the Capitalist Spirit* (London: MacMillan, 1983), p. 42.

13. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, *op.cit.*, p. 75.

14 Henri Pirenne, *Medieval Cities*, tr. Frank D. Halsey (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, n.d. [1925]), p. 88.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

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Thus Godric, Pellicani's putative exemplar of the spirit of capitalism before the Protestant ethic, is revealed as committed to a commercial ethos that is obviously and flagrantly in violation of this spirit. Godric rather exhibits an ideal type of the businessman who conceives commerce as an adventure in unfettered speculation, motivated by unlimited greed and pursued with absolute ruthlessness and unscrupulousness. This economic ethos clearly lacks the virtues that typify the spirit of capitalism: sobriety and diligence in commercial affairs; a dedication to the business enterprise rather than to the personal wealth of the businessman; the minimization of risk through careful analysis and calculation; and the ethic of stewardship that requires an unconditional obligation to conduct business as a high moral calling, an ethic that provided the entrepreneur with what Weber characterized as a pharisaically good conscience in the making of money. In sum, the economic superman of the Renaissance and the merchant adventurer of the Middle Ages do not exhibit the spirit of modern capitalism, the ethos of "the sober, middle class, self-made man."[16]

What is the basis of the ethic that differentiates the serene and self-confident attitude characteristic of the spirit of capitalism from the ambivalent and conflicted conscience of the wealthy Lincolnshire merchant whose life of relentless commercial speculation ultimately led to intolerable anxieties over the status of his immortal soul? The answer to this question lies in Weber's second response to the thesis of a pre-Protestant spirit of capitalism.

Weber maintains that the spirit of capitalism requires businessmen to exercise a systematic control and surveillance over the conduct of life as a whole and all of its details. Essential to this rationalization of life is the capacity and willingness of the businessman to subject himself to a discipline in which life is conceived as a project of rigorous self-management and regulation. The Weberian capitalist conceives his entire life — not merely specific activities, periods of time, or aspects of behavior — as an object of methodical training, supervision, correction, and coercion. The product of this reconceptualization of life as a continuous exercise in total moral and emotional self-control is the soul of the modern capitalist entrepreneur, initially the creation and subsequently the agent and instrument of this discipline. Discipline breaks down the actor into an ensemble of cognitive, emotional, and moral functions — attitudes, feelings, and obligations, all of which are subject to the oversight of the actor himself. Weber places special emphasis on two aspects of this process: the intensive mode of control and the minute scale of its operation, in which each aspect of the actor's life is scrutinized and reduced to its smallest manipulable parts; and the uninterrupted and unrelenting quality of the surveillance that the actor exercises over his life. The result of the systematic regulation of life by self-imposed discipline is the inculcation of specific obligations and prohibitions, positive and negative imperatives: the obligation to work in an acceptable calling and the prohibition against inessential leisure; the

16. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, *op.cit.*, p. 163.

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positive imperative in support of rationally calculated and ever-renewed profit-making; and the negative imperative against the consumption of these profits.

Weber argues that this self-administered discipline and the total rationalization of life that it effects depended upon a type of personality that presuppose an absolute commitment to a certain set of internally consistent values. These values of diligence, probity, punctuality, self-control, and frugality define the nature and limits of the personal ideal that Weber called inner-worldly asceticism. The development of such a personality was possible only on the basis of certain "psychological sanctions" and "moral premiums" that were unique to the Protestant ethic. The psychological necessity of "proving oneself" either before God (in the Calvinist churches) or before the congregation of fellow sectarians (in the Puritan sects) in order to gain and sustain confidence in one's own salvation was responsible for the moral premiums attached to the sort of conduct believed to evince salvation. The privileged moral status ascribed to this conduct rested above all on two doctrines. First, the collapse of the Roman Catholic dual ethic: a rigorous morality for the religious professionals and virtuosi and a more tolerant and relaxed morality for the religious masses. This was achieved by sanctifying, and thus ethically certifying as an unconditional duty, diligent performance in an acceptable secular calling. And second, a categorical imperative prescribing asceticism with regard to the consumption of worldly goods and proscribing emotional spontaneity and the enjoyment of worldly pleasures. According to Weber, these psychological sanctions and moral premiums provided the sole motivational basis for the development of inner-worldly asceticism as a type of personality. However, this type of personality was also a necessary condition for the development of the spirit of capitalism. The result: no spirit of capitalism before the Protestant ethic.

III

Consider now the argument that because of the incompatibility between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism, the former cannot qualify as an explanation of the latter. As support for this argument, Pellicani cites Luther's famous attack on the acquisitive spirit in his address *To the Nobility of the German Nation*. This evidence is completely irrelevant to Weber's position, most obviously because, as Weber himself repeatedly stresses, Luther's concept of the calling does not conform to the Calvinist concept that articulates one of the fundamental elements of the Protestant ethic. Weber identifies several reasons why this is the case.

The Lutheran concept of the calling is traditionalistic. The individual's vocation is ordained by God as the station in which God has seen fit to permanently place him. As a result, he must accept it as a decree of divine providence and accommodate himself to it, limiting his aspirations to the horizons established by this status. What is important to this concept is obedience, not achievement. Given this "absolute acceptance of things as they were," Weber claims,

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"it was impossible for Luther to establish a new or in any way fundamental connection between worldly activity and religious principles."[17]

The ultimate religious experience of the Lutheran is a mystical unity of the believer with the divine spirit, expressed in the feeling that the spirit of God had in some sense entered the soul of the believer. Psychologically, the result is an attitude of passivity and contemplation in which the believer longs for a cessation of activity in the *unio mystica* with God. Calvinism, on the other hand, claims that there is an absolute dichotomy between God and the world, a transcendence of the divine spirit in relation to the human being. This means that any such union is not only blasphemous, but also impossible on both logical and metaphysical grounds. The ultimate experience of the type of religious life that generated the Protestant ethic is the believer's subjective certainty of his own state of grace. This is not based on the feeling that he is a passive vessel of the Holy Spirit, but rather on the conviction that he is an active instrument of God's will. The former type of religious life, as Weber claims, leads to mysticism and emotionalism, the latter to ascetic action in which the believer demonstrates to himself the certainty of his salvation on the basis of performance, the results achieved in the mastery of his calling.

The Lutheran theory of grace entails that grace can be repeatedly regained by repeated acts of penitence and contrition by a believer who has a profound sense of his own sinfulness and unworthiness. Particular acts of divine grace can atone for particular sins. This means that there is no essential relation between the believer's state of grace and the conduct of his life as a whole. On the contrary, the relation to God is determined by existentially discrete and independent emotional moments of contrition, the authenticity of which is established by the purely inward piety of the believer. Thus it can be said that Lutheranism leaves the spontaneous and impulsive quality of emotional and moral life intact. As a result, it provides no basis for the systematic disciplinary supervision and control of conduct. Lutheranism lacks "the motive to constant self-control and thus to a deliberate regulation of one's own life, which the gloomy doctrine of Calvinism gave." This is why Weber claims that Lutheranism fails to supply the psychological sanction for inner-worldly asceticism that is produced by Calvinism: the compulsion to prove the certainty of one's salvation by means of performance in an acceptable secular vocation.[18]

Pellicani's use of the evidence provided by Calvin's attack on the acquisitive spirit also misses the mark. As Weber observes, Calvinism is not identical with Calvin's own theology. It was not the doctrine of Calvin but only Calvinism

17. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 126. See also p. 128 and Weber, p. 28 in Winckelmann ed., *Die protestantische Ethik II*, *op.cit.* For a more comprehensive account of the differences between the Lutheran and the Calvinist conceptions of the calling, see Poggi, *Calvinism and the Capitalist Spirit*, *op. cit.* Curiously enough, this is a point that Pellicani himself seems to appreciate (See "Weber and the Myth of Calvinism, *op.cit.*, p. 60), which makes his reliance on this argument all the more incomprehensible.

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— in the form of ascetic Puritanism — that led to the development of the Protestant ethic.[19]

However, Pellicani devotes most of his attention to the Puritan critique of money, wealth, and the things of this world. Do these considerations demonstrate an inconsistency between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism? In response to this question, I should like to make three points.

Weber notes that the Puritan tradition does not criticize wealth as such or even the pursuit of wealth, but only certain modes and consequences of this pursuit. Wealth is objectionable when it encourages the spontaneous enjoyment of possessions, a sensual delight in consumption and, above all, a relaxation of intellectual and moral discipline due to the belief that possessions make the possessor secure. It is this belief that is responsible for a love of the world and a lapse into idleness and the temptations of the flesh, all of which could cause the believer to stray from the true path of ascetic self-supervision and control. However, wealth as an investment in goods that the believer has acquired by means of his own honest industry and God's grace is not only ethically unobjectionable, but is actually morally enjoined by the Puritan tradition. It is the pursuit of personal wealth and its enjoyment that are anathematized. The acquisition of wealth as impersonal capital — detached from the personal use of the businessman and invested in an enterprise for which he is only the steward and trustee, accountable to God for every penny he earns — is a moral imperative of the Protestant ethic.

These considerations entail that it is a fundamental error to conflate the spirit of capitalism with greed and the love of money. The quest for financial gain and a passion for wealth, Weber claims, have nothing to do with the spirit of capitalism. As he repeatedly insists, these motives have existed in all cultures, in every period of history, and among all conditions of men whenever and wherever money economies have been established. "It should be taught in the kindergarten of cultural history that this naive idea of capitalism must be given up once and for all. Unlimited greed for gain is not in the least identical with capitalism, and is still less with its spirit."[20] As the above analysis shows, the spirit of capitalism imposes an iron discipline of self-surveillance and control that, at least under ideal conditions, eliminates all unregulated impulses, spontaneous desires, and irrational emotions, including, of course, the impulse of greed, the love of money, and the passion for wealth.

Finally, Pellicani's discussion of the relation between the Puritan critique of wealth and the spirit of capitalism betrays a radical misconception of one of Weber's principal aims in *The Protestant Ethic*: the demonstration of a paradoxical relation between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism. The paradoxical quality of historical processes, large and small, is one of the basic

19. See Weber, p. 30 in Winckelmann ed., *Die protestantische Ethik II*, *op.cit.*

20. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, *op.cit.*, p. 17. See also pp. 56-58 as well as Weber, pp. 33, 162, 168, 176, 295, and 298 in Winckelmann ed., *Die protestantische Ethik II*, *op. cit.*

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themes of Weberian thought and a source of some of his most pregnant sociological insights. Indeed, it is not too much to say that Weber's most characteristic historical and sociological arguments rest on the discovery of some paradoxical relation: a secular ethic of personal autonomy as a consequence of a religious ethic of personal submission; the anthropocentrism of the Enlightenment as a consequence of the theocentrism of the Reformation; an economic ethic of world mastery as a consequence of a theology of world rejection; bureaucratic rationalization as a consequence of charismatic innovation; the formal rationality of musical composition and the instrumental rationality of musical instrumentation as a consequence of the eccentric and capricious genius of the musical virtuoso.[21] The doctrine of the paradoxical quality of history has several important sources in Weber's thought.

The irony of intentions and consequences. According to Weber, there is an opaque and indeterminate relation between the intentions, motives, and purposes of actions and the results they actually achieve. The actor generally lacks a perspicuous view of the conditions under which his purposes can be realized. In the case of action oriented to traditions, he acts without even considering an attempt to identify these conditions and thus to estimate the likelihood of their satisfaction, thereby foregoing any assessment of whether his conduct will actually produce the results he envisions.[22] The result is an arbitrary relation between the intentions and consequences of action. There may be circumstances in which the consequences of an action may approximate the actor's intentions. However, it is in principle impossible for the actor to establish prior to the action whether these circumstances obtain.[23] The more typical case, according to Weber, is a more radically indeterminate relation between intentions and consequences,[24] one variant of which is that the consequences not only fail to realize the actor's purposes but actually defeat or nullify the aims he envisions. Thus it is hardly surprising if Weber denies that the promotion of the spirit of capitalism was not among the purposes of the founders or representatives of the Puritan sects. On the contrary, the economic

21. Weber's conception of the paradoxes of history has always been an important theme in the German secondary literature, and justifiably so. For an excellent general analysis, see Wolfgang Schluchter, "The Paradox of Rationalization: On the Relation of Ethics and World," pp. 11-64 in Guenther Roth and Wolfgang Schluchter, *Max Weber's Vision of History: Ethics and Methods* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

22. On Weber's concept of traditional action, see his *Economy and Society*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978). pp. 24, 226-31.

23. According to Weber, this is not an ontological peculiarity of human conduct. See his discussion of the infinite complexity of individual natural phenomena in *Roscher and Knies: The Logical Problems of Historical Economics*, tr. Guy Oakes (New York: The Free Press, 1975), pp. 120-24.

24. Popularized and, to some extent, vulgarized in American sociology by the influence of Robert K. Merton's concept of the unanticipated consequences of action. See his *Social Theory and Social Structure*, revised and enlarged edition (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1963).

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consequences of the Reformation investigated by Weber were largely unwitting, unforeseen, and unwanted results of the efforts of the reformers, "far removed from or even in contradiction to all that they themselves thought to attain."[25] Therefore, even if there were an essential incompatibility between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism — an incompatibility that Pellicani's essay does not demonstrate — it would not follow that the former fails as an explanation of the latter.

The open texture of cultural meaning. A second source of the paradoxical quality of history is the variability of cultural meaning. According to Weber, the values on the basis of which cultural meanings are defined remain "perpetually in flux."[26] As a result, cultural meanings themselves are subject to variation and transformation. Values are formed by the commitments of agents who are endowed with the capacity and the will to take a stand and define themselves in opposition to antagonistic commitments. Culture is an "endless progression" of these commitments, a historical configuration of artifacts that express changes in value positions and the meanings they form. This is why "the irrational reality of life and the content of its *possible* meanings are inexhaustible."[27] Because of the open texture of cultural meanings, the historical significance of actions and their artifacts does not remain constant. As a result, transformations in the significance of inner-worldly asceticism, from a proof of salvation and an unconditional moral obligation to a morally indifferent means of enjoying a comfortable bourgeois life, from there to an iron cage imposed by the contingencies of history, and ultimately to a sport completely devoid of religious and ethical significance — should provide no occasion for surprise.[28] Again, no incompatibility between the original significance of the Protestant ethic and the subsequent meaning of the spirit of capitalism would entail that the former is irrelevant as an explanation of the latter.

Eigengesetzlichkeit. Weber labels one of the preeminent features of historical development *Eigengesetzlichkeit*: the property which something has in virtue of the fact that it is governed by its own distinctive laws or subject to its own immanent norms. "We are placed into different life-spheres," Weber claims, "each of which is governed by different laws."[29] As they develop, the value spheres of

25. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, *op.cit.*, pp. 90-91. Weber appears to qualify this thesis when he ascribes to John Wesley, one of the founders of Methodism, an understanding of the relationship between the Protestant ethic, the spirit of capitalism, and the eventual "decay of pure religion" that this spirit produces (*Ibid.*, p. 175). See also Weber's claim that the reformers "knew very well what they were doing and what dangers they faced" (*Ibid.*, p. 280).

26. Max Weber, "'Objectivity' in Social Science and Social Policy," in Max Weber, *The Methodology of the Social Sciences,* tr. Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch (New York: The Free Press, 1949), p. 111.

27. *Op.cit.* I have altered the translation.

28. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-182.

29. Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills eds., *From Max Weber: Essays in* Sociology, *op.cit.*, p. 123.

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religion, ethics, politics, commerce, art, erotics, and science become increasingly autonomous. Each functions according to its own imperatives or quasi-nomological determinants.[30] As a result, actions and artifacts situated in one value sphere can acquire different, even antithetical, meanings when they become implicated in other value spheres. This is Weber's view of the fate of the Protestant ethic. Because of their impact on economic life, the moral principles of the Puritan sects acquired a new import — not only at variance with the intentions of the reformers, but in some cases even incompatible with their aims. As a result, these moral teachings led to results the reformers never envisioned and never would have endorsed. The transposition of the Protestant ethic from religion to commerce — the penetration of everyday life by the ideal of inner-worldly asceticism — produced what Weber called "the paradoxical achievement of asceticism." The Puritans were not driven by greed, the love of money, the pursuit of happiness, or *splendor familiae*. "They became rich *in spite* of their rejection of the world."[31] Because of the transformation in the meaning of the Protestant ethic achieved by its conquest of commercial life, any incompatibility between the original meaning of this ethic and the spirit of capitalism provides no grounds for rejecting the former as an explanation of the latter.

The tragedy of history. Because of these three features of history — the ironic relation between the intentions and consequences of actions, the open texture of historical meaning, and the inner dynamic that governs increasingly autonomous cultural spheres — historical processes can become self- defeating; or as this is sometimes put, obviously more melodramatically and not without new metaphysical overtones, tragic. Following Simmel, it can be said that a phenomenon is tragic when the forces that destroy it are necessary consequences of properties essential to the phenomenon itself. A tragic phenomenon destroys itself because there is some sense in which it is its nature to do so.[32] Weber argues that the ascetic conduct of life required by Puritanism led to an accumulation of wealth that tended to break the power of this same asceticism. In consequence, Protestant asceticism became "the power which ever seeks

30. *Eigensetzlichkeit* — the increasing autonomy of the various axiological and institutional spheres of life, their progressive mutual isolation, and the conflicts between spheres that are produced by this development — is one of the principal motifs of *Economy and Society*. On the respects in which commerce follows its own rules and comes into conflict with the value spheres of ethics and religion, see Weber, *Economy and Society*, *op.cit.*, p. 585. On the inner dynamic of the development of the state and its conflicts with personal values, see *Ibid.*, p. 600. On the tensions between the autonomous value spheres of sexuality and religious ethics, eroticism and religious ethics, and art and religious ethics, see *Ibid.*, pp. 604-610. On the increasing autonomy of law — based on "a blind desire for logical consistency" and "the needs of the uninhibited intellectualism of scholars" — see *Ibid.*, p. 789. On the inner dynamic of urban development, see *Ibid.*, p. 1309.

31. Weber, p. 168 in Winckelmann ed., *Die protestantische Ethik II*, *op.cit.* See also p. 299.

32. See Georg Simmel, "The Concept and Tragedy of Culture," pp. 27-46 in Georg Simmel, *The Conflict in Modern Culture and Other Essays*, tr. K. Peter Etzkorn (New York: Teachers College Press, 1968) and "On Love," pp. 153-92 in Georg Simmel, *On Women, Sexuality, and Love*, tr. Guy Oakes (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).

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the good but ever creates evil."[33] Commercial life pursued according to the regime of Puritan discipline destroyed the ascetic conduct of life that this discipline demanded by fostering "the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life."[34] As a result, the idea of a worldly calling governed by ethical imperatives "prowls about in our lives like the ghost of dead religious beliefs."[35] Considered in this light, *The Protestant Ethic* is a tragic narrative, and Weber's interpretation of the relation between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism has the dramatic structure of a tragedy. If we conceive *The Protestant Ethic* as a story about the aims, actions, and fate of persons, the tragic figure of this story is the Puritan. In acting according to the moral principles that constitute his identity, he succeeds only in defeating his most fundamental purposes and thus destroys himself as a Puritan. By subjecting himself to the rigorous demands of the ideal of inner-worldly asceticism, he becomes — unwittingly, unwillingly, and yet inevitably — a very different kind of human being, the materially secure and morally self-satisfied bourgeois for whom asceticism is not a moral imperative but, at best, a more or less useful strategy for success. If we conceive *The Protestant Ethic* as a more expansive narrative about the origins of modernity, then its tragic figure is Puritanism itself. In developing according to the principles of its own inner dynamic, Puritanism transforms itself into the spirit of capitalism, thereby nullifying these principles and destroying itself.[36]

In sum, the charge that the teaching of the Puritan tradition and the preaching of the reformed sects are antagonistic to the spirit of capitalism misconceives Weber's conception of the paradoxical relation between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism. It is one of the more bizarre features of Pellicani's critique that he proposes to refute Weber's position by demonstrating, in fatiguing detail, an essential premise of Weber's own argument: that the Puritans rejected wealth and, in general, repudiated the values of the commercial life. This is, of course, precisely Weber's point: the Puritans, ironically, achieved wealth in spite of the severity and zeal of their attack on Mammon. As a result, Pellicani's critique is irrelevant to the logic and evidence of Weber's argument. In conclusion, I should like to add two observations.

It is astonishing to witness yet another banal repetition of the claim that Weber is committed to "the autonomy of ideas and values and their power to generate substantial social changes,"[37] a thesis that is manifestly inconsistent with his explicit position on the causal status of ideas and values in history. In Weber's judgment, the doctrine that the spirit of capitalism was in some sense

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33. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, *op.cit.*, p. 172, a reversal of Mephistopheles's ironic characterization of his own personality.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 175. Here Weber quotes Wesley's language.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 182.

36. Here Weber, the consummate antagonist of Hegel's thought develops an argument the Hegelian logic of which is unmistakable.

37. Pellicani, "Weber and the Myth of Calvinism," *op.cit.*, p. 85.

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an inevitable consequence of the Protestant ethic is "foolish and doctrinaire,"[38] and he concludes *The Protestant Ethic* with the admonition — ignored by generations of readers — that it was not his purpose to replace a one-sided materialistic interpretation of culture and history with an equally one-sided idealist interpretation.[39] In his later comments on *The Protestant Ethic*, Weber emphasizes that "*there is no sense* in which the question of the influence of religious movements by economic processes could be regarded as settled by what I have established about the direction in which the *reverse* influence has taken place."[40]

Finally, we should not forget that Weber develops two arguments that link the Protestant ethic to the spirit of capitalism. The first is the argument of *The Protestant Ethic.* The Calvinist doctrine of predestination produced in the believer an inner need to prove his own salvation. According to Weber, this led, not logically but psychologically, to a powerful compulsion to ascribe a privileged moral status to the conduct of life required by the Protestant ethic. This is the argument that Pellicani attacks, without success as the foregoing analysis shows. In his successive essays on the Puritan sects, Weber develops an independent argument that Pellicani does not mention. The social organization of the Puritan sects and their theory of church discipline made the congregation as a whole jointly responsible for the religious purity of the sect. Above all, this entailed a collective responsibility to exclude from participation in the Lord's Supper unworthy, religiously lapsed, or otherwise unsanctified persons. Weber argues that this communal organization and exercise of discipline — which was independent of any belief in predestination — created in the sect member an inner need to prove his salvation before his fellow sectarians. The necessity of "holding one's own in the circle of his associates" subjected the sectarian to the regimen of a repeated and unremitting proof that he possessed the qualities essential to salvation. This need of "'proving' oneself before men in the sense of socially holding one's own within the Puritan sects" resulted in a psychology that endowed the ideal of inner worldly-asceticism with an irresistible moral force and dignity.[41] Thus even if Pellicani had succeeded in disposing of the argument of *The Protestant Ethic* — which, of course, he did not — the argument of the Protestant sects essays and the connection between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism remains untouched.

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38. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 183. See also Weber, pp. 28-30 in Winckelmann ed., *Die protestantische Ethik II*, *op. cit.*

40. *Ibid.*, p. 46. See also p. 183. Notice that Weber's denial of a quasi-nomological connection between the Protestant ethic, on the one hand, and the spirit of capitalism and the capitalist economic system, on the other, also disposes of the use Pellicani makes of the cases of Scotland and Norway ("Weber and the Myth of Calvinism," *op.cit.*, pp. 69-71). Contrary to Pellicani's allegations, no refutation of Weber's position follows from the fact that Calvinist religious traditions in these two countries did not result in a capitalist economy.

41. Weber, "The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism," *op.cit.*, especially pp. 305, 309, 312-17, 320-22.

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Rethinking Protestantism, Capitalism and a Few Other Things

Paul Piccone

How can it be that a careful scholar of Pellicani's caliber begins his demystification of Weber's *The Protestant Ethic* by warning about traditional Weberian responses to criticisms such as his with countercharges of "misunderstanding or . . . inadequate knowledge of the Weberian methodology,"[1] only to end up himself accused of perpetrating the same abominable malfeasance?[2] And how is it that this thesis, allegedly so indefensible that Pellicani can readily dismiss it in 27 short pages, has not only had a considerable impact on 20th century thought but is largely responsible — at least among the broader educated populace, if not among social scientists familiar with *Economy and Society* — for Weber's reputation as one of this century's most important sociologist? These are two of the more interesting issues generated by the most recent discussion

1. Luciano Pellicani, "Weber and the Myth of Calvinism" in *Telos* 75 (Spring 1988), p. 57.

2. That this is a typical response by Weber scholars of rather diverse philosophical pedigrees can be seen by how Alan Sica goes out of his way, in an otherwise unrelated review ("Weber and Mann," in this issue of *Telos*), to rebuff Pellicani's criticism. Unlike Guy Oakes' orthodox strategy (in "Farewell to the Protestant Ethic?" also in this issue of *Telos*) of deflecting what he takes to be unfair criticisms by deploying a close minimalist interpretation of Weber's texts (based rigorously on what Weber himself *really* wrote initially in 1904, in response to the barrage of criticism he received, and as a final highly qualified formulation before he died in 1920), Sica's psychologistic reading tries to dodge the issue altogether by arguing that what was really at stake was not primarily "who started capitalism," but something entirely different: the personality structure of those early Puritans who, despite themselves, became successful capitalists. But the point was precisely to show how the spirit of capitalism as Weber defined it was embodied by people with the kind of personality generated by the Protestant ethic, i.e., that capitalism required, as a necessary condition, precisely *that* kind of personality. Weber's subsequent sociology of religion sought to demonstrate how different sets of belief systems generate other types of personality resulting, correspondingly, in various types of social systems rather different from the one constituted by Western rationalism. His demonstration, however, was predicated on the same dubious causal relation between beliefs and character structure, rather than on a more concrete grounding of character structure within a broader socio-historical context of which religious beliefs are only a part, along with all sorts of other considerations also responsible for the constitution of those particular religious beliefs themselves. At any rate, both the psychologistic and the minimalist readings miss the mark for reasons discussed below.

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concerning Weber's account of the relation between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism by Pellicani, van Dülmen and Oakes. The answers that: (a) Pellicani has either not read or has systematically misunderstood Weberian texts analyzed *ad nauseam* in practically every introductory sociology course taught during the past three quarters of a century (Oakes); and (b) that *The Protestant Ethic* was really an ideological fusillade in the broader world-historical confrontation of Marxist and bourgeois thought at the turn of the century (Pellicani); actually raise more new problems than they solve. The matter warrants further investigation also because, almost 70 years after his death, Weber is once again becoming so topical among sociologists that over a dozen major monographs dealing with various aspects of his thought have appeared during the last year alone. Thus to understand the success of Weber's work in general and *The Protestant Ethic* in particular may not only help explain why issues concerning the relation between Protestantism and capitalism, religion and rationality, remain unresolved after all that has been written about them, but also the present state of social theory after the parallel collapse of Marxist paradigms and the steady decline in prestige of quantitative sociology in the wake of postmodern criticisms and the growing crisis of the welfare state.

Clearly, these are broad issues requiring far more space and time than can be devoted to them in a brief note. Consequently, the following will merely outline possible lines of argument and try to indicate 1) why there has been so much misunderstanding concerning Weber's thesis in *The Protestant Ethic*;[3] and 2) why this thesis has been so successful. In order to argue the latter, however, it is first necessary to briefly indicate: a) what Weber meant by the capitalist spirit; b) how, because of his obsession with rationalization and commitment to neo-Kantianism, he found himself in a methodological straight-jacket which prevented him from sharply distinguishing this capitalist spirit from its bureaucratic counterpart; and c) how attempts to redimension Weber's thesis as dealing exclusively with the constitution of a particular personality structure do not in any way either strengthen his thesis or spare it from objections even more severe than it normally generates.

Weber's Thesis and its Reception

The real issues concerning the conflicting interpretations of Weber's thesis in *The Protestant Ethic* by Pellicani, van Dülmen and Oakes have little to do with their competence as Weber scholars, or whether the thesis was a successful ideological Trojan horse whose latent function was to relegitimate a capitalism under siege on all fronts by Marxist criticisms. To cast some shadows onto matters which seem to be far too well-lit, it may be useful to ask what exactly was Pellicani's objective in undertaking an nth demystification of Weber;

3. As van Dülmen, Oakes and others have pointed out, there are *several* theses developed in Weber's *The Protestant Ethic*. For the purposes of this note, however, it will suffice to refer to all of them collectively as "the" thesis.

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why he and other allegedly "naive" critics of Weber may have been misled in this by now tiresome debate concerning *The Protestant Ethic*; and why a thesis which most Weberians readily agree was neither altogether original nor, when carefully reconstructed, ultimately very earth-shaking, has become so well integrated into popular consciousness.

Notwithstanding reams of paper devoted to elucidating "what Weber really said," Weber scholars have been surprisingly ineffective in clarifying once and for all the definitive formulation of Weber's thesis. Consequently, there has been a *popular* reception of *The Protestant Ethic*, seen as establishing a causal connection between Protestantism and capitalism, which conflicts sharply with what can be reasonably reconstructed as "the thesis" after a careful analysis of Weber's own account — especially his much more extensively qualified and nuanced reformulations written in response to the initial flood of criticism his original two essays generated, and after his ideas had become more systematized.[4] Not surprisingly, the really interesting sociological debate since 1905, when the work first appeared, has taken place concerning the popular *misinterpretation* rather than the scholarly *correct* but vague and theoretically inconsequential minimalist formulation of the thesis. Worse yet, the success of the thesis itself, and the inflation of Weber's reputation as a result, seem to have little to do with the intrinsic merit of either, but to be largely a function of extraneous factors rooted deeply in the history of this century.

It becomes immediately obvious from any cursory reading of Pellicani's and both van Dülmen's and Oakes' respective accounts of Weber's thesis that they are discussing radically different things. This may have to do with their different primary objectives. Pellicani's aim was to show, after he had already rejected Paul M. Sweezy's economistic explanation, the untenability of a purely *cultural* explanation of the development of capitalism, in favor of a *political*

4. Van Dülmen and Oakes, of course, are not either the first or the only Weber scholars to provide precise formulations of the thesis. Although, as Wilhelm Hennis points out (in *Max Weber: Essays in Reconstruction*, trans. by Keith Tribe [London: Allen and Unwin, 1988], p. 31), *The Protestant Ethic* is "a didactic catastrophe" in terms of unnecessary obtuseness and ambiguy, a careful reading does yield an account very close to van Dülmen's or Oakes' interpretations. That not much could be done with any careful reformulation of Weber's thesis had already been concluded by Ephraim Fischoff and other Weber scholars almost half a century ago. This is how Fischoff concluded his summary of the controversy: "In light of all this, Weber's thesis must be construed not according to the usual interpretation, as an effort to trace the causuative influence of the Protestant ethic upon the emergence of capitalism, but as an exposition of the rich congruency of such diverse aspects of a culture as religion and economics." Cf. "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: The History of a Controversy" in *Social Research*, Vol. IX (1944), reprinted in *Protestantism and Capitalism: The Weber Thesis and Its Critics*, ed. with an introduction by Robert W. Green (Boston: D.C. Heath and co., 1959), p. 113. This essay is also available, along with most of the relevant documents, in Johannes Winckelmann ed., Max Weber, *Die protestantische Ethik II* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gert Mohn, 1978), p. 369. There is no evidence, however, that this minimalist reformulation has in any way affected how Weber's thesis is understood, even by run-of-the-mill sociologists not particularly well-versed in Weber's works.

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account of which the article in question is only part of the argument.[5] This is why he chose to focus on the untenability of what is commonly understood — even by some lesser-known Weber scholars, whom he quotes — to be Weber's thesis, i.e., that Protestantism was in some sense *causally* related to the genesis of capitalism. What interested him first and foremost were the political and cultural implications of what is generally understood to be the thesis, rather than whether, in point of philological fact, Weber actually held it in that form or not. This explains why he did not indulge in an excessive amount of purely textual reconstruction at the beginning of his article.[6] Had he done so, he would probably have come to van Dülmen's and Oakes' conclusions, in which case the whole matter would have lost its interest and Pellicani would not have bothered to undertake a demystification of such a politically innocuous reformulation of Weber's thesis.

From the very beginning, Pellicani's main objective was not merely academic but also *political*. Although it would have deflected the wrath of Weber scholars had he clarified how it is possible to provide different readings of Weber's thesis and pointed out he was only interested in refuting the politically

5. It is an abbreviated version of the second chapter of *Saggio sulla Genesi del Capitalismo. Alle Origini della Modernità* (Milan: SugarCo Edizioni, 1988), pp. 39-85. Unfortunately, on the assumption that Weber's account was already well-known, the first ten pages of this chapter were left out in the English translation. In those pages (39-49) Pellicani reconstructs both the historical context within which Weber developed his analysis and the various modulations of the thesis in terms of the development of an ethos, a particular "anthropological type," and Western rationalism. Clearly partial to Sombart's alternative account, focusing on marginality and religious heresy, Pellicani's subsequent criticism of the popular account is predicated on two main considerations: 1) that, unless understood as establishing a causal connection between Protestantism and capitalism, the thesis dissipates into sociological irrelevance; and, more importantly, 2) since he is concerned not primarily with Weber scholarship as such, but with the origins of capitalism in general and cultural explanations of its genesis in particular, it is historical development rather than the viability of a particular ideal type that interests him. If all Weber can be said to have established is some vague "elective affinities" between Protestantism and capitalism — something that can be established between practically *any* two sets of entities — then *The Protestant Ethic* should have been intellectually remaindered even before the original essays were reprinted as a book.

6. While various versions of the minimalist interpretation are nowadays standard among Weber scholars, this reading is by no means universally shared. Thus, brushing aside talk of "elective affinities" as structuralist mystification running counter to Weber's own methodological strictures, Habermas restates the strong reading of Weber's thesis as positing a *causal* relation: "The Protestant ethic of the calling fulfills necessary conditions for the emergence of a motivational basis for purposive rational action in the sphere of social labor. . . it gets capitalism underway, without, however, being able to secure the conditions for its own stabilization." Cf. Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, vol. I, trans. by Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), pp. 222 and 228. Of course, Habermas then goes on for the next 50 pages or so qualifying the thesis into suitable shape so as to subsequently integrate it in his own theory of communicative action.

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consequential popular version, his criticism remains valid if it is restricted to that *popular* interpretation against which it was intended all along. His point was to emphasize political freedom as the *sine qua non conditio* for the original rise and subsequent growth of capitalism, rather than to privilege a particular set of religious dogma in the history of the development of Western rationalism. His critical bullets were ultimately aimed not at sloppy interpretations of Weber's thesis but at other more concrete political targets.

Pellicani's article is part a larger study, whose general argument goes a long way to explain why, as a *politically engaged* scholar, he became interested in this seemingly esoteric and academic issue which, in a still predominantly Catholic country like Italy, has had a long and politically explosive history.[7] On the one hand, he was concerned with refuting ideological claims, largely from the Right, to the effect that capitalism is rooted in a rationalization of religious world-views. This interpretation, which corresponds to the popular reading of Weber's thesis in *The Protestant Ethic*, tends to legitimate capitalism as a neutral meritocratic system by providing it with a normative foundation. Consequently, it feeds into a right-wing libertarian ideology condemning any state intervention as tampering with what is thereby assumed to be a fundamentally fair system by introducing ultimately counterproductive political perturbations. On the other hand, by identifying political freedom as the essential ingredient for economic growth, social well-being and cultural pluralism, he was able to checkmate a different set of ideological claims, this time coming from the Left, to the effect that capitalism is but a wasteful anarchic system of socio-economic domination necessitating massive state planning, regardless of costs in terms of possible loss of political freedom. The demystification of the

7. As a political issue, the question concerning whether Protestantism was a necessary condition for modernization is by no means a recent concern in Italy. Way before Weber wrote *The Protestant Ethic*, at the dawn of Italy as a nation in the second half of the 19th century, one of the founding fathers of the Italian state, Giuseppe Mazzini, predicated the modernization of a still-largely-feudal Italian society on the successful deployment of a Protestant reformation. On a more theoretical level, the same question of Protestantism and modernization was hotly debated in the early 1960s in one of the leading centers of Italian culture, the University of Naples, by Right and Left Hegelians such as Augusto Vera and Bertrando Spaventa. Whereas Vera advocated the need for a Protestant Reformation as the key to his essentially theocratic concept of the new Italian state, Spaventa argued for secularization *tout court*, whereby the state would simply take over what had hitherto been Church functions. Cf. Paul Piccone, *Italian Marxism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 35ff. Even Gramsci, who mentioned but never quite critically digested Weber in his *Prison Notebooks*, interpreted Marxism as the functional equivalent, in the 20th century, of the Protestant Reformation. Unlike Weber, who thought the personality of the "new man" needed for modernization and economic development could only be molded by Calvinism, Gramsci, who also predicated modernization and capitalist development on the molding of a new type of personality, saw this personality as being generated by the already rationalized capitalist production process and by the gradual spread of Marxist ideological hegemony.

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popular interpretation of Weber's thesis was aimed at both: it sought to rebuff rightist interpretations which de-emphasize the role of *political* institutions by hypostatizing individual freedom as the *summum bonum* (thereby moralizing the dynamics of economic life), while at the same time it indirectly defended the not always acknowledged need for institutionally-guaranteed individual freedoms against Left-inspired state regulations normally deployed as steering mechanisms of industrial and post-industrial economies.

None of this has anything to do with van Dülmen's precise reconstruction of Weber's thesis which, however, ends up qualified into minimalist irrelevance: "He did not attempt anything more or less than to demonstrate a particular 'elective affinity' between certain forms of religious belief and the vocational ethic he sought to more clearly define and explain . . . ."[8] If so, Weber's thesis cannot help explain anything, and neither Pellicani nor anyone else need ever have bothered with it. After all, there are many kinds of "elective affinities" between a great variety of things — especially if these affinities are a function of the deployment of certain ideal types, themselves uncritically rooted in an irreducible axiological dimension. Only when these affinities translate into meaningful explanatory patterns, however, do they become sociologically significant. When further concretized, as with Oakes, Goldman[9] and Sica, into an account of the constitution of a certain type of personality, it turns out to be inextricably embroiled in the broader project of the crisis of turn-of-the-century German bourgeois culture — a project whose articulation and proposed solutions, as we shall see, generate entirely new sets of objections making the thesis even more problematic and politically dubious than the usual, but wrong, *popular* interpretation. Thus the preliminary conclusion to be drawn so far is that Weber's thesis in *The Protestant Ethic* is either false in its popular interpretation, or irrelevant in its careful philological reconstruction.

Oakes' reply to Pellicani, grounded in a painstakingly careful re-reading of the texts in question, is that Weber was attempting to establish a necessary relation between the kind of personality generated by the Protestant ethics and what Oakes takes Weber to mean by the spirit of capitalism. The problem with this

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8. Richard van Dülmen, "Protestantism and Capitalism: Max Weber's Thesis in Light of Recent Social History," in this issue of *Telos*.

9. This is the main focus of Harvey Goldman, *Max Weber and Thomas Mann: Calling and the Shaping of the Self* (Berkeley, CA.: University of California Press, 1988). Following up on one of Karl Loewenstein's misleading quotes, Sica even suggests a parallel between Weber's and Freud's respective notions of personality. Nothing could be more wrong. Weber's account of personality structure is hyper-rational in that it directly translates beliefs into behavior. Freud classifies personality dysfunctions precisely according to the modes of interference of "irrational" factors in rational behavior. Neither have anything to do with Joseph Gabel's masterful *False Consciousness*, which Sica cites as his paradigm, since Gabel's objective is to show how social behavior generates psychological pathologies interpretable according to Marxist theory — especially the theory of reification. See Alan Sica, *Weber, Irrationality and Social Order*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 108-109.

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account is that, as I shall attempt to show, Weber's ideal type of the capitalist spirit, constructed within a neo-Kantian methodological framework mandating a particular notion of reason and rationality, forced him to confuse the capitalist spirit with its bureaucratic counterpart, thus misconstruing both — at least in the sense that they turn out to be useless in understanding recent history.

Kantian Capitalism or: The Spirit of Bureaucracy

Having reached such anti-climactic results, the question arises as to what was Weber *really* doing. If he was advocating the minimalist thesis, how is it that, notwithstanding its seeming irrelevance, this account has generated so much interest and respect within the sociological community? Here an altogether different line of argument unfolds which, however, generates results even more questionable than those derivable from a careful evaluation of the decades-long controversy concerning the extent to which Protestantism did or did not give rise to capitalism. It has to do with exactly what the spirit of capitalism is, and the extent to which Calvinism could and did mold the kind of personality necessary to articulate this spirit.

In his original demystificatory effort, Pellicani discussed Henri Pirenne's account of Godric of Finchale to demonstrate that "the capitalist spirit" antedates the Protestant Reformation and, as a result, cannot be considered its consequence. This does not sit well with Oakes, who correctly points out that Godric's *Weltanschauung*, along with that of so many rapacious early entrepreneurs, who during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance accumulated huge fortunes, has nothing to do with what Weber meant by "the spirit of capitalism." A quick examination of the relevant Weber texts readily reveals such is indeed the case. But in the process of checking through Weber's work, one striking feature stands out. What Weber meticulously describes as "the capitalist spirit" becomes increasingly suspect as the various characteristics are systematically laid out. By the time one finally completes the long march through Weber's texts to establish precisely what he meant, the suspicion arises that Weber has really managed to describe something entirely different: "the bureaucratic spirit" or something surprisingly similar to the *historically* and *geographically* specific spirit of Prussian officialdom. As Hennis has emphasized, for Weber the spirit of capitalism cannot be simply "understood as part of the development of rationalism as a whole," something that "could be deduced from the fundamental posture of rationalism on the basic problems of life."[10] Rationalism itself needs to be grounded axiologically, thus requiring a subjective mediation. This is why Weber's seemingly modest claim concerning "elective relation . . . between a particular sort of man and a particular form of social order"[11] is essential to the broader argument. Yet, when all is said and done, in Weber the spirit of capitalism cannot be disentangled from Western rationality.

10. Hennis, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

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Furthermore, given Weber's neo-Kantian methodology, this spirit could only be reconstructed along formal-rational lines, thus making it practically identical to its bureaucratic counterpart.

As a result of having uncritically accepted the provocative and politically significant (but fictitious) *popular* interpretation of Weber's thesis concerning the relation between Protestantism and capitalism, Pellicani also ends up projecting onto Weber what is popularly understood by "the capitalist spirit," without bothering to check the extent to which Weber himself had something altogether different in mind. Oakes correctly points out the discrepancies between what Weber and Pellicani mean by "the capitalist spirit." Having done so, however, he proceeds to reiterate Weber's own account, without providing any additional evidence of documentation in support of its objective validity as a satisfactory ideal type facilitating an understanding of modern history. From Pellicani's perspective of confronting the politically-meaningful popular reading of Weber, what Weber really meant, or misinterpreted, by "the spirit of capitalism" is not as important as showing what Pellicani did in fact show, i.e., that political freedom rather than any peculiar personality type constituted by some religious *Weltanschauung* is the *necessary* condition for the rise of capitalism and the functioning of a thriving economy.

Caught within an iron cage of neo-Kantian categories, Weber bought into a sharp differentiation of the neumenal reality of values and beliefs, on the one hand, and phenomenal manifestations of facts and historical reconstructions, on the other. As Goldman shows, the two dimensions are systematically articulated in Weber's sociology in terms of the concept of calling and of personality, running into similar philosophical *cul de sacs*. Unlike Kant, who also sought to universalize the axiological dimension, Weber could only go as far as to privatize it and thus relativize it in a massive sociology of religion, whose modest scholarly results were to have shown some relation between a kind of personality and rationalization (in sharp contrast to its popular and chauvinistic reception, where all this readily translated into a defense of the superiority of Western civilization, German culture, and bourgeois political leadership). In all this, the contingency of values had to be prevented from contaminating his methodology, whose objectivity was predicated precisely on its alleged value-neutrality. Weber did not ultimately manage to pull this off.[12] Instead, he sought to pose the problem of the objectivity of social science in terms of the development of an hypothetical-deductive methodology predicated on the deployment of highly problematic premises — the ideal types — themselves

11. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

12. Contemporary neo-Kantians are still attempting to carry out this project. It is no mere coincidence that Habermas today grounds his entire sociological edifice on a communication theory whose postulates are alleged to be presupposed by all possible discourses, thus overcoming an obstacle Weber's ideal types never successfully surmounted. The prohibitive price he has to pay, however, is an inadmissible linguistification of reality.

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constructed on the basis of otherwise ungrounded philosophical foundations. Here is where he may have fallen into a methodogenic trap, which led him to confuse the capitalist and the bureaucratic spirit. By developing *both* in terms of a mechanical model of rational behavior, he ended up misconstruing and conflating them into the same inadequate construct. Both Weber's account of the capitalist spirit and his analysis of bureaucratic rationality have become increasingly untenable not only in view of recent developments, but also in terms of the historical reconstructions they generate.

It would be superfluous here to indulge in a detailed description of what exactly Weber had in mind when he discussed "the capitalist spirit" — something Oakes has done all too well. As an ideal type, this capitalist spirit is clearly isomorphic with the bureaucratic spirit. Worse yet, when compared with historical realities, as Pellicani and scores of other critics have indicated, it turns out to have very little to do with "really existing" capitalism at all, either at its inception, during the *laissez faire* epoch, or in its post-New Deal statist phase. Weber, of course, only meant it to apply to a very specific early phase of capitalist development. Goldman, Hennis and other Weber scholars may be right in arguing that Weber's deployment of this ideal type was meant to salvage the notion of calling as decisive in generating the kind of personality type needed to ride out the early 20th century crisis Weber and many of his contemporaries were obsessed with resolving. Yet, to avoid the numerous misunderstandings his thesis has since generated, he should not have called it "the spirit of capitalism" *sic et nunc*, which it certainly was not, but more precisely, the ethic of some Protestants whose work contributed to the rise of capitalism as one of its unintended consequences. This is all Weber, in the most charitable possible readings, was able to show. It seems clear that, far from being the rule, Ben Franklin was really the exception — even in the 18th century. To the extent that what Weber actually articulated was not any "capitalist spirit" as such but, at best, something much closer to its bureaucratic counterpart, his ideal type actually applies to no capitalist prototype at any time other than when, for a very brief period and in geographically restricted areas, the household could be readily translated into a separate commercial enterprise and the social structure was loose enough to allow it sufficient autonomy to function as such (this may explain why Weber chose an American operating within Diaspora Calvinism — a context hypersensitive to the question of religious and, more generally, *political* freedom — as his prototype, rather than much more readily available exemplars in Europe, where the social structure was always too restrictive to permit the necessary autonomy).

As Oakes convincingly shows, Weber's own ideal type has little resemblance to medieval "economic supermen" such as Godric of Finchale, whose opportunism and lack of scruples conflicted with the responsible behavior of Weber's prototypical embodiment of the capitalist spirit, nor to early entrepreneurs described by Pellicani, whose decisions were always risky and transcended mere rational calculations — at any rate, something which

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most of the time could not be effectively made anyway. Even less was this ideal type meant to fit the "Robber Barons" of Weber's epoch. Although a John D. Rockfeller could afford to (and did!) indulge in inner-worldly asceticism, he did so only *after* he had already amassed his fortune by behaving in his youth in ways not all that different from the reckless, immoral and irresponsible Godrics of a few centuries earlier. At any rate, were any would-be-capitalist today to behave anywhere close to Weber's ideal type, he would not even last in business long enough to learn all about that "inner-worldly asceticism" he will have to practice after going bankrupt.

Although, as both van Dülmen and Oakes emphasize, Weber's account of the spirit of capitalism was meant to apply only in the early stages of capitalist development, this is not because what he considered the spirit of capitalism changed. Rather, what changed for Weber were the rapidly secularizing Protestants who ceased eventually to embody it. The calling was secularized, but the corresponding personality remained, or should have remained, roughly the same. Because of his neo-Kantian starting-point, Weber had trouble conceptualizing capitalism in terms other than a formal rationality that ended up confusing it with bureaucratism. Straight-jacketed within a hyper-rational model of ideal types, which could only yield formal categorical structures, he was forced to relegate the logic of capitalism *entirely at the categorical level*, cut off from that pre-rational *Lebenswelt* otherwise reserved exclusively for values, religious beliefs, personal neuroses and such-like residual entities. Since the latter are neither susceptible to quantification nor can they be readily accomodated by any kind of technistic calculus, they end up relegated beyond the pale of rationality and scientificity to the level of the preconceptual. This procedure, however, eliminates the most important difference between the capitalist and the bureaucratic spirit: the first engulfs both the categorical and the precategorical dimension, thus involving the capitalist's entire personality, while the latter sharply separates the two and restricts bureaucratic rationality solely to the categorical dimension. This also explains the superiority of the capitalist over the bureaucratic mode of organization — at least, during the stage prior to the statist bureaucratization of capitalism when, of course, the differences disappear.[13]

It is impossible here to undertake an extensive analysis of both the bureaucratic and the capitalist spirit. All that can be done, at least in order to indicate

13. This was the lesson American capitalism in general, and Ford Motor Co. in particular, learned the hard way almost half a century ago, when the deployment of a rigorous bureaucratic rationality brought many a previously flourishing enterprise to the brink of bankruptcy. Sloan's organizational innovations at General Motors consisted precisely in decentralizing the company so as to recuperate at the departmental level that minimal capitalist spirit necessary to prevent bureaucratic involution. More generally, the phenomenon of Soviet *perestroika* is meant essentially to deal with the same set of problems: the reversal of rationality into irrationality when the normative dimension is first procedurally excluded and subsequently altogether eliminated.

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the direction a more concrete critique of Weber should take, is to point to one essential difference. The traditional bureaucratic spirit is postulated on a sharp separation of goals and procedures — a Kantian as well as a positivist ideal — whereby the goals are externally determined by the political authorities, and the procedures clearly and rationally spelled out. The capitalist spirit as embodied in the figure of the *homo oeconomicus* cannot be so restricted for, unlike the bureaucrat who is not to be *personally* involved, he has everything at stake. As an ideal type, the capitalist must consider as a preliminary step in every business decision precisely that totality in relation to which, in *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukács defined concrete social science and determined social action.[14] Because the capitalist must act concretely, he is faced with the same quandary, but without any of the metaphysical guarantees Lukács sought to provide to revolutionary activity. As such, the determined business decision cannot obtain only at the level of *Verstand*, as with the bureaucrat, but must plunge into that *Vernunft* which, because of the inescapable particularity of the individual capitalist, always eludes him as an unreachable horizon.

This ideal type of the bureaucrat, of course, has been in serious crisis at least since the Nuremberg judgment. That event, more than any other, encapsulates the logical outcome of that very same dialectic of enlightenment of which Kantianism and the Marquis de Sade (and, *ipso facto*, neo-Kantians such as Weber) are the theoretical zenith. The bureaucrat today is no longer permitted to completely separate his personal feelings from his official functions — which creates a whole new series of post-Weberian problems. As far as Weber's description of the capitalist spirit, however, it remains that of a pre-Nuremberg figure of the efficient, impersonal, and hyper-rational bureaucrat: a kind of Prussian Dr. Spock with unbounded energy and willingness to work, whose goals are deduced from a complex set of theological axioms. As for an alternative ideal type seeking to capture the essence of "really existing" capitalists, the personal and the public, the informal and the formal, the normative and the factual cannot be split. The successful capitalist, unlike the bureaucrat, must always be able to intuitively fill in for that part of the totality he needs to take into account as part of his economic calculus, but which, for reasons outside his control, he cannot possibly access rationally.

At any rate, the ideal type of the "really existing" capitalist spirit cannot be predicated on the objectification of a calling into a neurotic personality structure, which in turn generates capitalism as an unintended consequence. Pellicani's alternative emphasis on pluralism and political freedom — something he finds already *in nuce* in Weber, but never fully integrated as *the essential*

14. Of course, Lukács was never able to disengage this logic from a transcendental notion of class, other than by reductively identifying it ultimately with the leader himself — in that particular case, Lenin — shortly before capitulating, on the strength of that very same logic, to Stalinist *partinost*.

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elements[15] — avoids the ethnocentric trap, while at the same time capturing the crucial dialectic between subjectivity, property and alienation. As such, unlike Weber, who cannot satisfactorily differentiate between the bureaucratic and the capitalist spirit — as a result of his commitment to an abstract Kantian rationality — Pellicani can better explain the inevitable socio-psychological self-destruction of that bourgeois society Weber desperately sought to preserve by deploying a quixotic "heroic individualism." Similarly, Pellicani's emphasis on the *social* rather than the psychological-axiological dimension also allows a thematization of the inevitable involution of capitalism as a result, not of the disappearance of a few neurotic Puritans, but of the bureaucratization of capitalist practice. Notwithstanding Weber's crucial role in the development of comparative historical sociology, his emphasis on the calling as the organizing matrix for personality can only provide a surprisingly static and inferior understanding of the nature and dynamics of capitalism when compared to neo-Marxist alternatives rooted in social praxis.

Beyond the Protestant Calling and the Bourgeois Personality

The flood of recent Weber scholarship is finally providing an account of Weber's work sufficiently sophisticated (if not always also historically concrete)

15. Interestingly enough, these reflections appear in his work on "The City," written during the same period he was also busy reworking another version of *The Protestant Ethic* to more precisely qualify the increasingly minimalist claims of his thesis. It would be interesting to carefully determine to what extent Weber initially put forth a strong interpretation of the thesis in the original version, only to refine it into irrelevance under the critical attacks directed against it. This is roughly the implication of Hennis' reconstruction of the various drafts from 1904 to 1920. Cf. Hennis, *op. cit.*, Chapter 1: "Max Weber's 'Central Question'," pp. 21-61. (Less convincing is Hennis' attempt to demonstrate the centrality of *Menschentum* in Weber's work). In many respects, Weber ran into the same problem Marx did when, in the process of completing the *Grundrisse*, he ran into the Asiatic mode of production and was forced to abandon attempts at a monologic genetic reconstruction of the development of capitalism. [See Paul Piccone, "Reading the *Grundrisse*" in *Theory and Society*, vol. 2, no. 1 (Summer 1975), pp. 235-256.]. As a result, *Capital* no longer contains the same theory of revolution found in earlier works and, as Gramsci put it almost half a century later in the wake of reformist readings by Hilferding and other Second International theoreticians, turned out to be a manual of *bourgeois* economics [see Antonio Gramsci, "The Revolution against *Capital*" in *History, Philosophy and Culture in the Young Gramsci* (St.Louis: Telos Press, 1976)]. Weber's own pilgrimage through world cultures in the process of working out his comparative sociology of religion may have had the same effect during the 15 years between the first and last reworking of *The Protestant Ethic*. The inescapable relativistic conclusions of this work may have gradually undermined the earlier bold monological attempt to vindicate the essential role of the Protestant ethic in the development of Western rationality and capitalism. The retreat to the final minimalist thesis saves its scientific validity, but at the cost of conceding far too much. Where Marx ended up forfeiting the eschatological foundations of his revolutionary project as a result of his decentering of Western civilization, Weber had to give up any hope for a vindication of the uniqueness of Western rationality and modern capitalism.

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to reconstruct in detail exactly what he sought to accomplish, how he tried to do it, and why he ultimately failed. A careful reflection concerning the reasons for these failures is, of course, the necessary starting-point for disentangling social science from the various *aporie* which presently besiege it. But this salvaging operation will never again put the sociological Humpty Dumpty together again — at least not in the way originally thought. That axiological decisionism beyond which Weber himself was unable to go and which doomed his *oeuvre* to end up a brilliant and astounding ethnocentric monument to a valiant but failed attempt to vindicate Occidental rationality, remains an insurmountable obstacle to the project of sociology as a science of society. Ever since Weber's death, this science of society has survived either as a variety of versions of what is ultimately market research — an inextricable part of the logic of domination — or, in its Marxist variant, as a bankrupt project of massive social engineering. Its postmodern future generates an altogether new set of problems impossible even to list at this point and, at any rate, well beyond of the scope of the present note.

The popular misinterpretation of Weber's thesis concerning the role of Protestantism and the rise of capitalism has been so successful because it reinforced a variety of deeply-rooted but rapidly eroding biases necessary for national or, even more broadly, Western modes of self-understanding. First of all, notwithstanding its "idealist" slant, its account of modernization and progressive rationalization fitted all too neatly into that Marxist philosophy of history that traced a necessary trajectory from ancient to communist society. The seemingly bothersome inversion of structural and superstructural levels made a difference only in the choice between the equally untenable alternatives of an economic determinism or its idealist otherness. It legitimated Western imperialism as an unavoidable civilizing force exerted by West European societies at a higher stage of world-historical development towards more backwards ones. Secondly, at least for the leading world powers, at the time all predominantly Protestant, it smugly reassured them of the superiority of their ways and the need to universalize them. Thirdly, it provided a normative justification for growing inequality and social stratification. Given all this and more, how could such a thesis, presumably blessed by the social science establishment, fail to succeed, while at the same time rewarding its alleged author with the kind of notoriety he has been bestowed?

Unfortunately, the fate of what Weber really meant does not hold up much better than that of its popular misinterpretation. Some of the unsavory political consequences of all this have already been drawn by Mommsen.[16] The emphasis on charisma, *Führerdemokratie*, the need for leadership by a new meritocratic bourgeois aristocracy, etc. are not merely political aberrations, but flow directly out of Weber's sociological *Weltanschauung*. For the limited

16. Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Max Weber and German Politics 1890-1920*, trans. by Michael S. Steinberg, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984)

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purposes of this short note, it is sufficient to merely list a number of problems, some of which have already been broached, that recent scholarship has uncovered, but not yet sufficiently analyzed: Is what Weber considered the spirit of capitalism *really* useful as an ideal type to understand capitalism at any point in its historical development? To what extent is Weber's ideal type of capitalism really more appropriate for the bureaucratic spirit? Is his model of progressive rationalization as the essence of modernity really tenable? Notwithstanding his massive sociology of religion, is the personality structure Weber deemed essential for the rise of capitalism possible *only* with Calvinism? To what extent is the secularized personality structure he saw as necessary for the retention of bourgeois political leadership and, *ipso facto*, the overcoming of the crisis of turn-of-the-century bourgeois society, different from the patriarchal, authoritarian personality that feminist criticism, occasionally for very good reasons, has been attacking for more than two decades?

Recent ancestral worship of bygone men of Weber's caliber glosses over an immense dark side of their personalities and political projects which, in addition to producing interesting scholarship, was also responsible for relations of domination among sexes, classes, age groups, etc. inconceivable today.[17] They were the sort of authoritarian personalities that contributed considerably to filling the uncomfortable couches of Freud and his collegues. They saw themselves as the new aristocrats concerned primarily with defending their class privileges and prerogatives rather than taking advantage of the new conditions, created by modernity, for emancipating the overwhelming majority of the population. Not too many tears should be wasted decrying their disappearance as historical curiosities: in many respects, this has meant a significant social advance.

Weber's project of reconstruction of the impact of Calvinism on the development of "the capitalist spirit" in order to identify the personality type that had made the modern world possible ends up, some 15 years after he wrote the original account in 1904, as an effort to legitimate *his own* type of personality as the hope of Western civilization. It hypostatizes Wilhelminian Germany as a social ideal to be defended against the democratic onslaught seeking to benefit from the opportunities modernity has created, but which those whom Goldman calls "the new aristocrats"[18] were seeking to prevent at all costs under the pretense of defending a rapidly fading bourgeois society. What can one do today, at a time when no bureaucracy works, when rationalization has become practically synonymous with increasing irrationality and, almost as a result, religion is once again selling well among practically all social strata? What remains of Weber's theory of rationalization, of the efficient bureaucracy, and of progressive secularization?

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17. As Guenther Roth points out (in "Weber's Political Failure," in this issue of *Telos*), Weber's political role in the aftermath of WWI is not likely to enhance his political reputation.

18. Goldman, *op. cit.*, pp. 165ff.

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Special Section: Recent Weber Literature

Weber in Context: The Dilemmas of Modernity

Harry Liebersohn, *Fate and Utopia in German Sociology, 1870-1923* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988), 282 pp.

A question worth pondering: What has it cost us to have what we have? What values or modes of life have had to be excluded so the values or modes of life we affirm today could flourish?

For something *to be*, something must be excluded, and this exclusion is usually double. For the present *to be* what it is, for example, much from the past must be displaced, and much *that could be* must also be denied. Hence what *is* exists at the price of what *is no longer* and what *is not yet*. To view matters this way is to place the present in a peculiar light. Normally, the present is not talked about in terms of what is missing or occluded. In the contemporary media, in advertising and the culture industry as a whole, the present is generally celebrated as the locus of the kind of life every generation in history has longed for but which none have been able to achieve until now. The past, it is inferred, has not been destroyed but transcended; since the present is "better" than the past, letting it go has been no great loss. Likewise, the future as something qualitatively different than the present is not being blocked; it is simply that the future cannot even be conceptualized in any other way than as an extension of the present. The message we get is that the future will be more or less the same as what we have now, but with a greater number of services to enjoy and goods to consume.

This was not the view one could find roughly 75 to 100 years ago among the individuals who could be called the founders of German sociology. For Ferdinand Toennies, Ernst Troeltsch, Georg Simmel, Max Weber, and Georg Lukács — the five social theorists whose worldviews are the focus of Liebersohn's fine book — the present was fundamentally problematic. All had a firm sense of

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what was *absent* from the past in what was present, and some had an equally sharp understanding of what the present was *preventing* from coming into being.

For each of these individuals another term for the present was "modernity," which meant, among other things, industrial capitalism, the division of labor, secularization, the break-up of organic unities, and the consequent fragmentation of social, political, and cultural life. As Liebersohn points out, far from being treated with enthusiastic approval as is so frequently the case today, modernity was regarded as a burden or dilemma — even as something "tragic" or "fateful." The "fate" that capitalist society represented was new: not one imposed by the gods but one of man's own doing, for it was humanity itself that set the forces of social fragmentation and alienation in motion. By the 19th century the forces of modernity seemed to many not only to have escaped human control but to be reacting back upon the very world that originally unleashed them, and always with disastrous consequences. A question that invariably came up then was: What can be done about modernity? If modernity is a problem, what is the solution?

In late Imperial Germany three kinds of answers were given to this question. The first was the answer of the Far Right, which was to turn back, with force if necessary, the tide of modernity; desert the metropolis and return to simple village life; restore wherever possible peasant or rural values, the so-called *Kultur der Landschaften und Stämme*; resist in every way the incursions of "finance capital," industrial levelling, and the secularization of traditional and religious values.[1] The second was the answer of the liberal middle class, which generally advised acceptance of the "fate" of modern capitalism. For some this fate brought economic advantages which made it more palatable, while for others it brought a host of new problems that had to be solved. In either case, the assumption was that modernity could not be reversed so there was no choice but to accept it and make the best of it. The third solution was that offered by many left-leaning members of the younger generation before WWI (i.e., those born in the 1880s and 1890s). To them, the fatefulness of modernity merely set the stage for a new epoch. They saw the seeds of immanent possibilities lying hidden within the bad reality of the present. Consequently, the pessimism of their elders gave way to optimism, tragic despair turned into radical hope. From the perspective of the young generation, the alienation produced by modernity was only transitional; beyond it lay the approaching "red dawn" of a new era.

Of the five individuals dealt with in Liebersohn's book, all responded to modernity in ways suggested by the second and third answers. Four of them (Toennies, Troeltsch, Simmel, and Weber) basically accepted modernity and chose various ways of working within it, though even these individuals occasionally

1. Typical of this response was, for example, Ernst Rudorff's "German Movement for the Protection of the Homeland" (*Deutsche Heimatschutzbewegung*). See Richard Hamann and Jost Hermand, *Epochen deutscher Kultur von 1870 bis zur Gegenwart*, IV (Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, 1977), pp. 327-29.

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thought they caught glimpses of a way beyond it. One of them, the youngest (Lukács), who was thoroughly steeped in the thought of the other four, tried dialectically to draw from their conceptions of modernity a vision of an entirely new type of social order which would replace the existing one engendered by capitalist relations of production. Liebersohn does an excellent job of elucidating these divergent assessments of modernity. In *Fate and Utopia* he pursues lines of thought not usually treated, especially with regard to the often overlooked religious backgrounds and concerns of Toennies, Weber, and the others. He also takes the reader into many of the nooks and crannies of German intellectual history, opening to view many individuals who would otherwise remain obscure (Paul Göhre, Richard Rothe) or else confined to narrow discussions within their disciplines (Albrecht Ritschl in theology, Theodor Storm in literature, etc.). Usually this is highly rewarding, but occasionally Liebersohn's investigations lead to a dead-end (as, for instance, his extended remarks concerning Weber's involvement in the deliberations of the German Sociological Association between 1910 and 1912, which don't seem to find their way back to the main points of his argument).

In dealing with his five central figures, Liebersohn correctly approaches each in terms of a framework they all utilized to one degree or other: i.e., the simple relation between past, present, and future. All agreed about the nature of the present, which was indisputably an age of disruption and fragmentation; but they profoundly disagreed about the nature of both the past and the hoped-for or implied future, and these disagreements were what made each very different types of social thinkers.

Toennies conceived the past as an age of *Gemeinschaft*: organic, holistic, traditional, familial, authentic. The present was an age of *Gesellschaft*: decadent, atomistic, materialistic, fractured by self-interest and class conflict. Though in his major work *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (1887) he tried to be objective, it was clear that "community" was spiritually and morally superior to "society." Moreover, it was also obvious that, because of the ineluctable forces at work in history ("fate"), there could be no going back to *Gemeinschaft*. But if fate had produced modern society out of traditional community, was it possible that modern society could in turn engender a "new community" at some point in the future? There were obviously precedents in German thought for thinking so, and Toennies had read his Hegel and Marx. In addressing this question, he flirted with socialism as a way beyond the present: a way that might usher in a new form of *Gemeinschaft*. Before WWI he thought he saw in socialism, and in the working-class movement as a whole, "lingering memories of primitive communism." From these residues a new community might be created once capitalism had broken down or been destroyed. The path to the future would then be through the *Aufhebung* of the present. Later (and Liebersohn does not stress this enough), Toennies began to wonder if socialism — itself clearly a product of "society" — was not tainted by the very forces that produced it. Like Michels,

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Weber, and others, he began to think that, since socialism was part and parcel of "society," it could not escape its all-enveloping processes (bureaucratization, instrumentalization, rationalization, etc.); socialism could therefore not be seen as pointing the way beyond the miasma of the present. Toennies eventually lost hope even in the syndicate and factory workers' collectives, which once seemed to offer possibilities for something new. His conclusion: we are stuck in *Gesellschaft*. We can neither go back to a lost past nor forward to a better future. We must do the best we can within the limitations of the present.[2] Generally this meant finding and developing pockets of community *within* society. Toennies did this in his private life, searching out "spiritual friendships," speculating on how to create Platonic academies of scholars, and joining organizations like the German Ethical Society. But all this amounted to a kind of resignation. Except for some vague musings in an essay on religion he wrote in the 1920s (but never published), Toennies seems to have given up hope that a new community embracing both the public and private spheres would ever materialize.

Troeltsch also used the past-present-future framework, but with different emphases. To him, the past was not as rosy and the present not as bad as Toennies indicated. If anything, Troeltsch tried to reconcile elements of community and society within the existing order rather than set them up as antipodes. As for the future, he had no clear picture of it, though he did have a keen appreciation of the utopian content embedded in the Christian apocalyptic tradition, and he did occasionally reflect on the future possibilities of a "free demythologized form of Christianity." But more typically, Troeltsch suggested that chiliasm seems always to end in failure. With few exceptions, it gets channelled into either institutionalized churches or small, ineffective sects, both of which can exist more or less comfortably within "society."[3] In the last analysis, he saw no option but to work with the givens of modern life, support reformist politics, and learn to survive as best one could "without absolutes."

Simmel, who shared some of these views, was a far more interesting figure. Discounting as myth the notion that there existed at any time in the past a beautiful, harmonious *Gemeinschaft*, he avoided the temptation to fetishize "community." In all his work, there are almost no traces of a yearning to return to some allegedly holistic epoch of the past. At the same time, he made few comments about the future for the simple reason that, since it had not yet

2. To his credit Toennies never believed — once he despaired of socialism — that the state could create a new *Gemeinschaft*. The state was even more a product of "society" than the labor movement, and hence could not be looked to for redemption. Toennies lived on into the Hitler era and totally rejected the Nazi claims that the German state represented an authentic embodiment of *Volksgemeinschaft*. See Arthur Mitzman, *Sociology and Estrangement* (New York: Knopf, 1973), p. 117.

3. To be accurate, Troeltsch believed that the sect may still preserve elements of chiliastic fervor, but these are redirected away from the larger community into tiny, disciplined groups which no longer seek to transform the world as such. In this sense, the sect also compromises and adjusts to "society."

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arrived, nothing meaningful could be said about it. That left only the present, and for Simmel that was the only point in time which seemed deserving of his attention. Since the present meant "modernity," his message ultimately was: we have to accept modern life for good or ill and learn to make our home within it. Yet, paradoxically, Simmel also opposed modernity, at least theoretically. In fact, in his scattered writings he developed a scathing critique of it, including a critique of the money economy, the division of labor, commodification, reification, the effect of capitalism on values, and the processes by which an unwieldy "objective culture" had gradually come to undermine a meaningful "subjective culture." Despite all these attacks, however, there is no sense in Simmel that the present harbors seeds of transformation.[4] Any dialectical notion about the disease somehow providing the possibilities of its own cure were foreign to him. Instead, he sought out values *within modernity* which seemed personally attractive to him, while at the same time — and again paradoxically — opposing the overall framework of capitalism, which not only encased but to a great extent helped engender these same values. Fragmentation was bad, but the tremendous variety of experience fragmentation produced was good; organic solidarity no longer existed, but there was beauty to be found in a life built upon, in Baudelaire's words, "the transitory, the fugitive, and the contingent." By this mode of thinking, Simmel believed he could defend some of the social and cultural byproducts of modernity without specifically defending its ugliest features, though in this he may have been deceiving himself. In any case, he immersed himself in everything that seemed vital and experimental, including *avant garde* artistic movements like Symbolism and Impressionism, esoteric poetic cliques like the George Circle, and seemingly "progressive" philosophical developments such as *Lebensphilosophie*. Because so much of contemporary life seemed so valuable to him, utopia was already in some respects present in the now, and consequently it did not have to be worked for in the future. If one learned how to appreciate life with the right "attitude," one could subjectively experience a sense of totality in the moment, whether that totality was really there or not.[5] The world could become alive, beautiful, and rich not necessarily by changing it but by *aestheticizing* it. Simmel knew his Marx and Hegel too, but he did feel the "labor of the negative" was needed, since the possibilities of wholeness could be fulfilled within fragmentation, not by projections beyond it.[6]

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4. On the contrary, Simmel's inclination was to eternalize the present: to treat particular or transitory forms of experience as if they were universal. As one commentator (Arthur Salz) put it: "Simmel dealt with problems *sub specie aeternitatis* while feigning to deal with them *sub specie momenti*." See David Frisby, *Sociological Impressionism* (London: Heinemann, 1981), p. 102.

5. Margarette Susman, *Die geistige Gestalt Georg Simmels* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1982), p. 36; David Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), p. 52.

6. Liebersohn finds some references in Simmel, particularly around 1914, that

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Max Weber, the pivotal figure in the book, looks very different by comparison. To be sure, Weber, like Simmel, refused to romanticize the past. In his view, there never had been a *Gemeinschaft* worth returning to, even if one could.[7] Similarly, the future was treated as something fundamentally problematic; Weber always felt uncomfortable with (though also intrigued by) those who thought they saw the configurations of a new community about to burst through the integument of the present. Generally, both nostalgic escapes backward and utopian projections forward appeared to him as "flights from the world." They were escapes from the real issue at hand, which was to face up to the present and solve the most pressing issues of contemporary life.

The position Weber worked out is highly interesting and worth paying careful attention to, though Liebersohn, probably for lack of space, only focuses on part of the whole picture. First, Weber was clear that there are no immanent forces operating in history: no teleology, and hence no purpose, no goal, no direction, no unfolding of temporal "stages" on the way to some supposed end of history. To assume that "laws of development" exist would be to impute meaning to social phenomena the phenomena do not themselves possess. For Weber, reality was simply "a vast chaotic stream of events, which flows away through time."[8] To attribute meaning or direction to this stream of events would be to hypostatize one's own subjective wishes or expectations onto outer reality and thereby distort it. This was one reason Weber argued for value-free social science; if such imputations were minimized, one could presumably come closer to discovering the truth of things beyond one's private projections. But in Weber's opinion, no way was being prepared to deliver humanity from the "iron cage" of the present, for neither God nor the dialectic was charting a path toward some future utopian fulfillment.

The same anti-determinism applied with regard to the past. The present did not arrive by "fate," though it is true Weber sometimes gave this impression. The triumph of rationalization, for example, was not inexorable. It occurred in the West because particular forces were set in motion at particular times, and these forces were not successfully opposed or reversed. Eventually they became cumulative and then appeared irreversible. This is the way things happen

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suggest he was searching for a "new community," but I think even Liebersohn would not claim these were in any way typical of Simmel's work as a whole.

7. Liebersohn might disagree here. He leaves the impression that Weber believed ancient Greece was an age of "full and beautiful humanity," but this description summarizes the view of Goethe, not Weber. (Weber cites Goethe to this effect in *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.) Similarly, Weber did not regard the ancient polis as a "community" in any meaningful sense. It was composed of a plurality of values and interests (symbolized by the plurality of gods) and hence resembled, if anything, an early form of *Gesellschaft*.

8. Max Weber, cited in Jürgen Kocka, "The Social Sciences Between Dogmatism and Decisionism: A Comparison of Karl Marx and Max Weber," *Modern German Sociology*, ed. Volker Meja *et. al.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), p. 83.

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historically. There is really no inevitability, but people frequently act as if there is. They may even resign themselves to "fate" when there is still room to resist it — in which case the fate then usually does occur, often with tragic consequences precisely because it was in some measure avoidable. In any event, Weber believed that, however modernity evolved, it had become the only reality there is, so there was no choice but to come to terms with it. Simmel asserted this as well, but Weber went beyond his colleagues in discussing the variety of options or maneuvers available in confronting the actuality of the present. Only what seem to me the three major ones need be cited here.

The first was "plain hard work," personal integrity, and "intellectual honesty." In this option, the point would be to choose, according to one's value system, a legitimate project, dedicate oneself to it, and achieve something within it, however modest. This was by no means Weber's ideal, but it was something. The scholar represented this choice. For Weber, the true scholar was an individual who submitted himself to a "calling" and then worked within his discipline to the best of his ability, with "inner devotion to the task" at hand.[9]

The second option was that of "heroic individualism." Here, in this more dynamic life-choice, the idea would be to achieve a full, robust *Persönlichkeit* beyond all individual specializations; to operate with no illusions, but yet confront the world as it is instead of retiring from it; to act, especially in the public arena, to make things better, while knowing full well they will never become ideal; and to create one's own meanings once the source of collective meaning has dried up. This option would amount to an almost Nietzschean conception of how to attain dignity and autonomy, but with a much greater stress on public and political engagement than can be found in Nietzsche.

The last option was the practice of love (as Eros or Agape). In this choice the point would be to reclaim and personally embody certain surviving aspects of "community," but once again to do so entirely within the present, rather than by thrusting them forward as hopes for the future. What Weber especially had in mind were certain modes of connectedness and intimacy he feared were slipping away due to the pressures of modernity. It would be, he thought, a valid option for some individuals to practice on a social level an ethic of communitarian "goodness" or universal brotherhood in the manner of Tolstoy. On the purely individual level, it would be equally valid to establish an authentic love relationship between two individuals who, in the way they contacted one another soul to soul, would preserve disappearing elements of "community," even if only *à deux*.

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9. Weber seems to have made a distinction between the genuine scholar and the so-called *Fachmensch*, who is more often than not the bureaucrat or the "official." The *Fachmensch* is a "cog who clings to a little post and strives for a somewhat greater one," while the dedicated scholar is regarded as a *Berufmensch* (i.e., a this-worldly ascetic devoted to his vocation). See Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. by Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford, 1958). pp. 129-56.

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As Weber made clear, all three options had their positive and negative sides, but each was valuable in its own right because each represented an alternative to resignation — to the mindless adjustment to existence. "Heroic individualism" happened to be the choice Weber most strove to emulate. This option naturally assumed that the arena of the present was the place where one must act, but at the same time Weber was not completely blind to the future. Every act in the present had consequences in the future, and since the acts of individual subjects were essentially undetermined, the future was also basically undecided, open-ended. As a liberal, he surely needed the sense of freedom this view afforded. By contrast, many of the views of the scientific socialists of his day seemed offensive, not only because they spoke of laws of history and dialectical inevitabilities, but also because the very "goals" of socialism seemed to accentuate precisely the worst aspects of capitalist modernization. According to Weber, if socialism were ever established it would likely do more harm to freedom and culture than even capitalism, because it would bring more central planning, more bureaucracy, more state direction, and more focus on *Produktionsvernunft*. Extra bars would be added to the iron cage, and people would have even less space to "be themselves." The possibilities of heroic individualism would shrink accordingly.

Enter Lukács. By seeing him, as Liebersohn does, as the principle heir to the German sociological tradition just described, one can perhaps come to understand him in a different light. For example, it becomes immediately obvious that Lukács was most like Toennies in that he accepted, at least in his *Theory of the Novel* and other early works, that there was once an integrated, harmonious state of being destroyed by modern society. However, he was unlike Toennies in refusing to sentimentalize *Gemeinschaft*; instead he postulated it as a goal to be achieved in the future. Similarly, Lukács was like his teacher Simmel in seeing near total fragmentation in modern (capitalist) culture, and yet unlike him in denying that this condition had to remain permanent. Lukács wanted a fully authentic culture, not a decadent one. Moreover, he wanted a culture really present in the world, a culture that truly reconciled the individual to his community, not one built on a private, merely subjective "attitude" toward culture. Finally, Lukács was like Weber in his powerful concern for participation and engagement, and in his urge to make the world better; but he was unlike him in his stress on a dialectical conception of time. And, of course, Lukács eventually came to view socialism in ways wholly unacceptable to Weber. Socialism was not a vague ethical projection (as Weber sometimes regarded it) but a real historical possibility, and one which, if realized, would not limit the free individual but enlarge and in fact complete him.

On the basis of these and other differences with his predecessors, Lukács was able to move from a reformist to a revolutionary outlook. By transcending Simmel's aesthetic impressionism and Weber's political liberalism, he passed beyond a primary interest in the present — in modernity — and began

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to focus more directly on an approaching epoch of wholeness and unity. At first he saw the coming new age in almost apocalyptic terms, then later from a Dostoyevskian perspective, and finally, after 1918, through Marxian lenses, he regarded it as communist society.

In dealing with his five social theorists, Liebersohn keeps his discussion confined to the period 1870-1923. Still, it is evident that Simmel and Weber, for example, represent characteristic intellectual "types" still around today (Simmel being the aesthete interested in self-transcendence; Weber, the activist bent on understanding and changing a flawed reality). Lukács also represents a certain "type" of individual — one which cannot help but judge the "is' in light of the "ought." Unlike the others, he was unable to adjust to modernity, since in his view it was an age of "absolute sinfulness" and therefore had to be overturned. Since Liebersohn does not take sides, he makes no suggestions about the best way to conduct one's life. Nonetheless, Weber seems to stand out as a kind of model in his presentation, perhaps because his hard-headed political realism has an attractive aspect to it. There is, after all, something worth respecting about a man who, without illusions and without hope that miracles will ever be achieved, nevertheless throws himself into a vacuous present in order to make it at least a marginally better place than it was before he entered it.

David Gross

Contextualizing Sociology

Wolf Lepenies, *Between Literature and Science: the Rise of Sociology*, trans. by R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 388 pp.

The topic of this richly researched book is sociology torn between the poles of scientific objectivity and aesthetic authenticity in its development. From its start in the middle of the 19th century, the attempts to establish a science of society with a norm of exactitude derived ultimately from the natural sciences, encountered obstacles in experiences that evaded the categories of mathematical rationality: art, religion, intersubjective values. Lepenies shows why these blind spots were not tangential concerns. Before sociology had a guaranteed perch in the academy, before sociologists could count on the job security of their tenured positions, the discipline struggled to assert itself as a genuine

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field of study, especially against politics and history; claiming to provide a comprehensive description of the social realm. Yet, if this self-appointed science of society could not address some of the most important aspects of social life, what reason could the ministries of culture have to support it? Or, once it made its way into the university to define society from that prestigious forum as a body of statistics, did it not in effect impoverish society by robbing it of its most important parts — its literature and language? This was the accusation that anti-rational intellectuals levelled against the Durkheim school. In this case, the conflict between science and literature, mind and heart (Lepenies prefers metaphor), was played out between sociological insiders and external opponents. In other cases, such as those of Comte, Mill, and Simmel, the split ran through the middle of the sociological project itself in very different ways. The story of sociology is, then, the history of a third terrain between C. P. Snow's two "cultures" of natural science and literature. (The literal translation of the original German title is "The Three Cultures.") The book examines how this third culture emerged with the work of Comte and Durkheim in France; Mill in England; Weber, Mann and Mannheim in Germany.

Lepenies' volume rescues a tradition of *qualitative* sociology at a time when the field as a whole has been highjacked by the number-crunchers. Today, the exceptions to the statistical tyranny in sociology can probably be counted on the fingers of one handt. From the mid-19th century to the mid-20th, however, sociologists or their predecessors entered into productive, if often problematic, exchanges with literary intellectuals. But while Lepenies is evidently fascinated by Helmut Schlesky's appeal to Heinrich Böll to regularize discussions between (social) scientists and belletristic authors, he does not tell us why it did not come to pass. The main part of his story comes to an end in the 1930s with the Nazi destruction of sociology in Germany. The remarks on post-war developments are only sketchy: very little about the exile situation in the US; next to nothing about the Frankfurt School for Social Research (a censorious omission in a study of this kind); and no examination of the role played by American social-scientific paradigms in West Germany. Yet, while Lepenies does not tell us how a scientistic stance came to dominate contemporary sociology, he does demonstrate how sociologists and "men of letters" in France, England, and Germany were closely embattled where today they do not even notice each other.

Lepenies describes scenes from those battles in minute and studied detail. Some of his material is not new (for example, the discussion of Mann and Weber). But much of it is, especially the treatments of Comte, Beatrice Webb, and the connection between Mannheim and T. S. Eliot. There is no reason to fault such erudite scholarship for disregarding the present character of the discipline unless, of course, there is a hidden agenda. Lepenies has one, expressed in a covertly programmatic passage in the preface: "The assault on sociology by literature and the men of letters — in many instances an assault inspired by the spirit of the counter-Enlightenment has always been successful whenever sociological thinking, overpowered and transported by the desire to imitate the

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natural sciences, has claimed the ability wholly to replace metaphysics and religion and become a substitute for faith and the heart. The expulsion of the feelings from the social sciences and other disciplines has taken place in the name of an arrogant rationality which desired to be not only the means to knowledge but at the same time a philosophy of life and a substitute religion. In attempting this, however, rationality attempts too much and promises more than it can perform; and when the self-doubt thus engendered does not suffice for self-healing the feelings do not merely regain their rights — they are enhanced to a cult of irrationality such as finds expression in the totalitarian ideologies" The passage is remarkable for several reasons. First, although phrased as if it were the author's message, it stands at odds with the book itself. In the best and most suggestive passages, one finds accounts of how sociology, despite an initial desire to mimick the natural sciences, grew richer through encounters with "the heart." Far from adhering to the dogmas of "an arrogant rationality," an erstwhile qualitative sociology grew closer to the claims of literature to its own advantage, as Lepenies meticulousy demonstrates. If, however, the foregrounded message does not jive with the results, something else may be going on in the text. But what?

An additional, curious inspiration for the quoted passage is Lepenies' evaluation of the consequences of irrationalism. While sociology itself attempted to moderate its claims to natural-scientific objectivity, it was nevertheless frequently viewed from within and without as all too rational; and Lepenies traces this irrationalist opposition to fascism: from the attacks on Durkheim to the *Action Française*, from the George circle to the Nazis. Let us leave aside the objection that much more was involved in the rise of fascist ideology — certainly too much to be addressed in a single volume (but then the causal connection between sociological rationalism and fascist irrationalism ought to be relativized). More striking is the unambiguous assertion that the "cult of irrationality" is expressed in totalitarian ideologies. Lepenies not only cites Fritz Stern's *Politics of Cultural Despair*, but even Lukács' *Destruction of Reason*. This avoids the question of whether irrationalism, anti-sociological or otherwise, might have also found expression in alternative non-totalitarian, even anti-fascist solutions: e.g., Landauer's socialism, Barth's Protestantism, Scholem's recovery of mysticism, and the late Husserl's diagnosis of science. It is by no means the case that every critic of secular rationality ended up in goose-step (not to mention the difficulties in decoding the George Circle which could lead both to a Führer cult and the attempt to assassinate Hitler in 1944).

Who is Lepenies trying to admonish by sounding the alarm that fascist troops are bubbling up out of the brown slime of an irrationalist swamp? Evidently, sociologists who, too devoted to the Enlightenment, attempt to imitate natural scientists and displace "metaphysics and religion." Who is that? No one in this book: certainly not Durkheim or Simmel. More likely, Lepenies is warning post-1968 left-wing sociologists that if they pursue reason too avidly the opponents of reason will soon rear their ugly Stahlhelms. This is a recognizably

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liberal warning which slides into a neo-conservative critique of the "new class" of social scientists.

Turning away from the program to the study itself, however, one finds that Lepenies is far from seeing the new class as a problem. Classical neo-conservatism criticizes intellectuals from the standpoint of the free-market. A non-conservative, phenomenological critique counterposes to the bureaucratic new class concrete experience and a reconstituted community. Instead, Lepenies' study stays within the intellectual class. It is intellectual history neither as a history of ideas nor a history of institutions, but as history of intellectuals viewing intellectuals. The results are mixed. One can learn a lot from this book about what anti-sociologists thought about sociologists, and vice versa: what Barrès said about Durkheim in the Chamber of Deputies; how Mill's friends raised their eyebrows at his reading of Wordsworth; why Leavis responded to Snow; and what Gundolf wrote to George about Simmel. This is very useful indeed; a painstaking tracing of connections among intellectuals, whom Lepenies is inclined to characterize in memorable ways: "Although Leavis' forefathers were Huguenots, he was the most unfrench of critics"; or, more boldly, Nietzsche was "more poet than thinker." However, this approach necessarily excludes some other material. Concentrating on the history of intellectuals (or, more precisely, what they said about each other), the account omits social history — both in a larger contextual sense (this ignores that sociological interests in rationalization have anything to do with transformations in society), and in the sense of a social history of criticism. To measure Lepenies' account of British sociological thinkers from Mill to Leavis and Raymond Williams (who has strangely been demoted to an afterthought), against Terry Eagleton's *Function of Criticism*, or to compare his overall treatment with the analysis in Peter Hohendahl's *Institution of Criticism*, points up how little attention Lepenies devotes to the sociological settings of intellectual labor: for example, the transformation of the public sphere, the publishing industry, and the structures of academic institutions. The history of sociology turns into a history of writers writing about other writers, applauding or attacking each other, always jockeying for positions within a network of intellectuals. These writers are not "relatively autonomous," as the phrase used to be, but fully freed from the law of gravity, floating gloriously upwards, high above the unwashed city below — to which they only imagined themselves to be referring.

As an account of intellectual networking, *Between Literature and Science* also tends to exclude another subject: the texts of the sociologists and their aestheticizing challengers. To be sure, Lepenies quotes a plethora of remarks and reciprocal characterizations, and even reprints George's poem on Simmel and Gundolf's on Weber. But he also avoids an intensive reading of the texts of sociological theory. It is all well and good to hear what the poets said about the sociologists; it would be better to hear Lepenies analyze the social-theoretical texts themselves in order to show precisely where, in the major works, the sociologists answered or avoided the literary challenge. After a

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while, the concentration on the networks of intellectuals turns into a frustrating avoidance of the intellectual works.

As valuable as the reconstruction of the lost past of a qualitative sociology through a sympathetic rendition of the literary modification of the "science of society" is, it remains an account of relations between competing intellectuals, representatives of the heart versus representatives of the mind, battling over the claim to represent society. What is missing is a relativization of the status of intellectuals: are they all that is at stake? When does the representation of society turn into its repression? How do intellectuals lose touch with the reality they claim to describe? Criticizing, implicity, a sociological arrogance that excludes culture, Lepenies by no means follows the neo-conservative attack on the new class; instead, his solution is evidently aimed at a broadening of the new class to include both literary intellectuals and scientists, heart and mind, Böll and Schelsky. This reconfiguration within the new class, intended to repair the insensitivity of social planners by adding a healthy dose of values — high-tech plus Western culture — still ignores what lurks outside the intellectual network. Beyond heart and mind, there is the problem of the never fully articulated goals of a community. Contemporary scholarship prefers to privilege language. It has become the privileged medium of scholars who think the scientific community is not the best but simply the only possible community. Despite their differences, communicative theories and discourse theories are both language theories and therefore intellectuals' theories, in particular university theories. By focusing on themselves, their own interrelations, their networks, their careers, today's professionalized intellectuals — after the disappearance of public intellectuals — turn the university away from society and away from ideals of community. Ultimately they turn it into just a labyrinth of offices with central heating and xerox machines to duplicate their c.v.'s. Students are only too righty disappointed, which is why they strike. The university ought to be more.

Lepenies' book shows how it might have been: how at least the social sciences might have been much richer than they have become. The argument would have been more forceful if the analysis had gone beyond a reconstruction of networks. For example, Lepenies' treatment of Weber documents in interesting ways the tensions and mutual admirations between him and the George Circle. Both sides were concerned with the consequences of rationalizaton, the disenchantment of society, and the loss of values. Lepenies also draws attention to the important connection between Weber's biography, especially his crisis of 1897, and the character of his work. In contrast to readers of Weber who present him as a value-free advocate of a shiny modernization theory cheerfully differentiating itself into several spheres, Lepenies recalls how close Weber was to the irrationalist critics. Nevertheless, he leaves the relation as a proximity between fundamentally incompatible choices: George's oracular hermeticism and Weber's "reluctance to enter into questions of value." Pushing the dialectic further, one might ask how the alternative choices marked and changed each other. For George, that would entail an examination of his verse in which a formal

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rationalization of language takes place, i.e., a modernization of the artistic material that can in no way be equated with the feudal masquerades of the circle's members, including the master himself. However, in order to save the poetry from the groupies, to read the text against the author (Adorno proposed as much in his speech on "Poetry and Society") would require a grappling with the texts and not reports on their reception.

The same holds for Weber. The vigor of his assertions regarding value-freedom has to be taken as a sign of a strong temptation to set values: hence the central role that religion plays as the original transvaluator of values, the only alternative to the banality of routinized existence. It was in the wake of the personal crisis and the study of the Protestant ethic that Weber began to develop the notion of charisma, borrowed directly from current church-historical debates (between Rudoph Sohm and Adolf von Harnack). Moreover, charisma represented for Weber a "third culture" — beyond the monotony of traditionalism and the modernity of rationalization. To be sure, he does not follow George, whom, as Lepenies points out, he identified as a charismatic leader. It is, however, equally certain that Weber understood the role of charismatic prophecy in the foundational moment of any substantive culture, and his encounter with George helped clarify his thought on this point. To trace the repercussions of that encounter, one would have to follow closely the transmutations of the category of charisma within the social-theoretical texts themselves.

Finally, *Between Literature and Science* implicitly raises a question about the status of biography in intellectual-historical method. The book covers a lot of ground, with perhaps 12 major figures surrounded by a host of other characters. In one sense, the chapters are impressionistic essays that rely on the suggestion of a connection between life and work: halfway between case-studies and literary portraits, the method is the book's message. It is a matter of interpretation and tact to decide whether the biographical elements chosen in each instance are significant and whether they appropriately illuminate the intellectual material. By and large, Lepenies' choices are exemplary, although once again his program claims something a bit different from what his scholarship offers. For example, to promise a "secret history" of women in the social sciences, one ought to provide more than, next to Beatrice Webb's work, Comte's liaison with Clotide de Vaux or Mill's with Harriet Taylor. The material is nevertheless of interest and demonstrates in case after case the extent to which biography is useful in the treatment of intellectual material. This is a crucial matter after the debates on Heidegger and de Man, during which post-modern critics, who for years had been shoving Foucaultian lessons about discursive formations and institutional power down the throats of an overpaying public (their students), suddenly turned into new critics screaming "biographical fallacy" and preaching the pristine innocence of philosophic texts. Academics are so adaptable, moving from one critical mode to another as expediency demands in order to maintain what Stanley Fish has, in a self-revealing moment, designated the goal of the game, the "authority of the interpretive community." Yet if literary

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critics can already do two different things in a row, perhaps they will someday learn how to do two different things at the same time: discuss both texts and contexts; ignoring neither nor reducing one to the other. Lepenies' volume has appeared in a series entitled "Ideas in Context" — this idea sounds good to me.

Russell A. Berman

Weber and Women

Marianne Weber, *Max Weber: A Biography,* with a new introduction by Guenther Roth (New Brunswick and Oxford: Transaction Books, 1988) 719 pp. +xv-lx.

I

Biography appears to be the most natural genre of historical writing. Compared to social history (at the opposite extreme as the history of collectivities), it seems to come ready-made. Whereas the social historian must define a class or other group having no formal boundaries, and pull together bits and pieces of information from sources as dispersed as its individual members, the biographer has a life and (in the best possible case) a neat collection of papers and works to go with it. To historians who think biography exempt from the kind of gathering, ordering and selection involved in writing about an imaginatively conceived new topic, it seems to be a paint-by-numbers game of filling in the spaces on an already outlined tableau. As part of the given rather than the "made" world, its claim to membership in historical studies looks tenuous.

In recent years, extra-historical criticism has taught us to suspect both practitioners and detractors of making their task too easy when they assume the naturalness of biographical conventions. Ethnographers have explored alternative ways of constructing the self in non-Western cultures, which may reduce personal names to minor significance and instead situate the individual in bizarre temporal and spatial configurations lacking anything like our own conception of substantive personhood.[1] Recent French thought and its American disciples have explored the discontinuities within Western personal identity

1. See Clifford Geertz, "Person, Time and Conduct in Bali," in *The Interpretation of Culture: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp.360-411; and James Clifford, *Person and Myth: Maurice Leenhardt in the Melanesian World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

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and transgressions and digressions leading beyond it,[2] and feminist criticism has questioned the unity of concepts like "biography" and "self" whose "natural" pronoun has historically been masculine.[3] This feminist critique has an apt target in the middlebrow genre of biography that favors statesmen and military men and extends to men of science. Its book club audience responds to more than just anecdotal interest or world-historical influence. As far back as Plutarch, perhaps the granddaddy of them all, such lives have been models for would-be subjects of future biographies, ritually laying down the stages of male success.

Heroic male biography enjoyed one of its great revivals in Germany from the early 19th to the mid-20th century. The legend of the Prussian Elector Frederick William ("the Great Elector") turned a moderately gifted ruler into the founding father of the Hohenzollern dynasty's Calvinist-Stoic traditions of self-discipline; Frederick II came to exemplify the sacrifice of feminine sensibility to masculine responsibility; Bismarck's life affirmed aristocratic malehood from the fencing duels of his youth to the duels of his maturity with bourgeois politicians. It took generations of literary and scholarly artifice to shape this Prussian tradition of biography. Imagine as its emblem, concentrating the stories in a single image, the famous picture of Bismarck wearing a *Pickelhaube*, the spiked helmet now oddly suggestive but in its (pre-Freudian) time an unself-conscious symbol of masculine-military prowess. For the Prussian males who passed from the drill of the Gymnasium to army training and bureaucratic career, it symbolized the spirit of combat that sat like heavy metal on the head of the nation's highest civilian.

Max Weber would have made a good candidate for a biography in this tradition. Fraternity life at Heidelberg changed him from a gangly adolescent into a beer-swilling, duel-scarred student; reserve officer training, which his letters describe with harsh vividness, toughened him. The melodramatic belligerency of the Imperial era marked his youthful speeches from the 1890s, shot through with Social Darwinist insistence on preparing the nation for the struggle for existence and denouncing the tender-minded belief that human happiness could be the measure of national policy. The contentious style stayed with him to the end. As part of the German delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, Weber sent Clemenceau an angry note disclaiming German responsibility for the outbreak of war. After the end of the war his writings continued — in a mixture of realistic prediction and surreal fantasy — to threaten the victorious powers with a return of the *furor teutonicus*. Throughout his adult life he quarreled with the individuals and nations who ran up against his peevish sense of honor, charging his foes at times like Dürer's knight, at others like Don Quixote.

2. See Jerome Christensen, *Practicing Enlightenment: Hume, the Formation of a Literary Career* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987).

3. See Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982); and Barbara Johnson, "My Monster/My Self," in *A World of Difference* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 144-154.

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II

Marianne Weber's *Biography* has an ambivalent relation to hero-worship. Roth's important new introduction, "Marianne Weber and her Circle," leaves no doubt about Marianne's motives for writing it; this was a devoted wife's monument to her departed husband. After his death in 1920, she lived, in her own words, for his immortality on earth, overseeing editions of his widely scattered writings, compiling a selection of youthful letters, and eventually writing the biography to establish his reputation (by no means assured) as the outstanding thinker of his generation. Page after page of the latter bears witness to her belief in his greatness. The Rilke poem she chose for an epigraph portrays him as a classical hero wrestling with the deity: the ancestor determining his character was G. F. Fallenstein, a tumultuous scholar and patriot supposedly descended from the legendary Wallenstein; the Old Testament figure who haunted her portrayal of the later war years was Jeremiah, forced to bear the prophecy of national ruin. A rhetorical gigantism, a succession of tropes to magnify him to larger than human proportions, governs the narrative.

And yet, from the time of its original publication in 1926, Marianne's *Biography* has disquieted readers. Not all have been as frank as the Heidelberg jurist Otto Gradenwitz, who commented that it helps us understand the reasons for the Hindu custom of widow self-immolation, but others too have questioned the tastefulness of the revelations about her husband's personal life. Offensive to many contemporaries must have been her detailed account of the conflict that began with discord between Max's father and mother Helene, which culminated in a confrontation in July 1897 between the elder Weber and his protective eldest son and ended in the father's death a month later and the son's nervous breakdown soon thereafter. In his review of the first edition, Friedrich Meinecke defended Marianne against the charge of indiscretion, comparing the domestic drama to a Greek tragedy and praising her skill at capturing the cultural atmosphere of the prewar era.[4] Today scholarly opinion is still divided between detractors who consider Marianne's *Biography* a gossipy, amateurish effort, and admirers of this epic of Germany's educated elite. If even admirers must admit that Marianne could be annoyingly casual about providing dates (especially when excerpting letters!), even detractors have to rely on her to reconstruct Weber's life. Her portrait gave lasting shape to our image of the man in his era; future biographers will fill in and adjust but not fundamentally change the lines she laid down.

III

Roth's essay draws on many years of reflection and study as well as extensive research to produce what is to my knowledge the first biographical sketch

4. Friedrich Meinecke, review in *Historische Zeitschrift* 135 (1927), reprinted in René König and Johannes Winckelmann, eds., *Max Weber zum Gedächtnis* (Cologne and Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1963), pp.143-147.

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of Marianne Weber in English. It captures the dilemmas of a feminist career whose tensions between self-fulfillment and wifely loyalty, between particularism and universalism in the women's movement, have not lost their relevance today. It also beautifully evokes the atmosphere of the Webers' difficult marriage and famous cultural milieu. Several features of the essay merit special mention. Its sketch of Max's liason with Else Jaffé, his former student and the wife of his friend Edgar Jaffé, has a reliability (and brevity and subtle humor) lacking in Martin Green's fanciful account.[5] The story of Marianne's life in the thirty-four years after her husband's death in 1920 clarifies her relation to the Nazi regime — not dishonorable, but unheroic and therefore a cause of remorse in the last years of her life — and reveals a shift on her and Alfred Weber's part to a strong rejection of Max's value relativism (which weakened one's resolve in the face of dictatorship).

Above all, Marianne's feminism comes into full view. Far from being the innocent hobby of an academic wife, it turns out to have given the *Biography* the feminist perspective upsetting to her male critics. The introductory essay permits us to see the book anew as an important event in the history of women's writing, apart from its stature as the life of a famous man. Together with the *Biography*, it deserves an audience broader than just the Weber specialists who will most immediately profit from it.[6] Roth prefaces his essay with a discussion of female biographical genres. In the early 20th century "dutiful wives" and "pious daughters" produced a wealth of chronicles setting down the lives and works of their talented husbands and fathers. These works sprang from specific traditions within the German middle class. A confessional literature of religious self-examination sharpened women's psychological perceptions. Family chronicles were another form of legitimate female literary expression. Both genres left their mark on Marianne Weber's writing. She used letters and her personal memoirs to write about her husband almost from within, as if a diarist recording the drama of a conscience, with self-knowledge and ethical restraint sometimes maturing in tandem, sometimes driven apart by experience. Sensitivity

5. Martin Green, *The von Richthofen Sisters: The Triumphant and the Tragic Modes of Love. Else and Frieda von Richthofen, Otto Gross, Max Weber, and D. H. Lawrence. in the Years 1870-1970* (New York: Basic Books, 1974).

6. The forthcoming German version of the introduction contains several significant additions. Among the most important: 1) The Webers and Jaffés made a joint trip to Italy in the fall of 1909 from which Marianne returned early. During the trip she realized how strongly Max felt attracted to Else. Hence there was never a time when he fell short of his obligation to be frank to his wife about the situation. 2) Although Marianne did not hide her (and Max's) initial enthusiasm for WWI in the biography, anonymous writings she published in *Die Frau* in February and August 1915 reveal the violence of her emotions with unusual clarity. Her still fervent, quasi-religious absorption in the national community says a great deal about the feelings of isolation and frustration she and other members of the middle class felt in the prewar era. Weber scholars will wish to consult the German for other new findings too numerous to list here. See Guenther Roth, "Marianne Weber und ihr Kreis," introduction to Marianne Weber, *Max Weber. Ein Lebensbild* (Munich, 1989).

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to religious culture joined the gifts of a remarkable family chronicler as Marianne traced the permutations of Calvinism from Max's Huguenot grandmother through the liberal Protestant generation of Max's mother, Helene, and her sister, Ida Baumgarten, to the secularized, formalized, still unmistakably Protestant outlook of Max Weber himself. The biography is unusual for the amount of space it gives to this family chronicle, which so distinctly links it to a feminine genre of German historical writing. With artful indirection, Marianne shows how the women of the family provided the religious culture that so profoundly shaped Max Weber's personality and scholarship.

Roth points out that the book has not one but three central figures: Max, his mother Helene, and Marianne. Two lovers, Else Jaffé and the Swiss pianist Mina Tobler, play smaller but still visible roles. Once we locate Max within this constellation, the changing definition of gender roles in prewar Germany take on striking importance for his development.

Consider Marianne's marriage to Max in 1893, when she was twenty-three and he was twenty-nine. From the beginning it contained tensions between the normal roles of husband and wife in Imperial Germany and the Webers' self-conscious attempt to create a new style of companionship and equality. Marianne was the subordinate member of the relationship, and neither would have dreamed at the time that she would become more than a loyal helpmate. While his encouragement of her wish to attend the lectures of his Freiburg colleagues after his appointment in 1895 showed a certain openness, it fell far short of encouraging a "career" — something that did not exist in the academic world and could hardly be found outside it in Germany at the time. Their ethos of partnership contrasted with the patriarchal practices of their parents' generation, but did not directly challenge established legal or economic arrangements.

This changed after Weber's descent into incapacitating illness. Then Marianne embarked on a career of her own: under her husband's supervision, to be sure, but creating an independent reputation for herself as a scholar and publicist. Her first book, a study of Fichte and Marx, appeared in 1900; *Wife and Mother in Legal Development*, which followed in 1907, contained a historical and ethical critique of patriarchy and argued that to elevate the wife to the status of legal equal of her husband would raise the ethical worth of the institution of marriage.[7] Roth describes how Friedrich Paulsen, one of Germany's leading pedagogical authorities, and Emile Durkheim rejected her egalitarianism in their reviews of the book. However moderate Marianne may seem by today's standards, her proposals were an affront to the patriarchal order of her own time.

In the decade before WWI Marianne's reputation rivaled and in some respects surpassed her husband's. While Max led the life of a private scholar who had saved his health by resigning from his professorship in 1903 and keeping only the title of *Honorarprofessor* at the University of Heidelberg, Marianne

7. Marianne Weber, *Ehefrau und Mutter in der Rechtsentwicklung. Eine Einführung* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1907; reprint, Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1971).

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reached a wide public through her activities in the burgeoning feminist movement as a leading "moderate" who argued for expanding educational opportunities for women while preaching a repressive sexual morality. Roth recounts the conversation between two craftsmen in December 1908, recorded by Marianne in the *Biography*, when Max made a speaking appearance: "Who is that Max Weber, anyway?" "Oh, he's Marianne's guy. (xxiii)" Not until after the outbreak of WWI did Max Weber take full part in public life again. From the turn of the century to 1914, however, their relation was — for all the world to see — an odd one. He became a cripple in his calling, while her scholarship and public advocacy of women's rights surpassed the conventional calling of a married woman, though not without exposing her to ridicule for failing to fulfill her "natural" calling of motherhood. The author of *The Protestant Ethic*, who recognized both the necessity and the spiritually impoverishing effects of modern occupational life, could cull much material for reflection from their professional fates.

The role of Helene Weber in the Marianne's *Biography* is large — too large to fit into a properly heroic life. She towers over the early part of the book and later receives her own chapter. What did she mean to her eldest son? Certainly the ascetic ethos he made his own; Marianne emphasizes this, and so have later interpretations. But also something different and less obvious: an access to the social connectedness of life. The young Max Weber was, on the one hand, a single-minded careerist, on the other, he grew up in the role of eldest sibling who occupied a mediating position between parents and younger brothers and sisters. Marianne's choice of letters and anecdotes makes the companionship of mother and eldest son a major theme of the biography. The death of a daughter in 1876, when Max was twelve, permanently darkened Helene's life and marked the beginning of her estrangement from her husband. The somber sense of duty which Helene transmitted to her son originated not just in her religious faith, and in the privacy of the Protestant conscience, but also in this family event. Eventually he took over the vacant paternal role of counselor and confidante in raising the other children, conferring with his mother about the development of his younger brothers, Alfred (the later sociologist) and Karl, and taking a spontaneous, affectionate interest in his sisters. Through his relation with his mother and participation in the life of a large family he shared (by the time of his university years) in the insights usually reserved for parenthood.

The family context both nurtured and confined Max Weber. Ethical rigorism, a central concern of his life and work, is inseparable from his shifting relations to women. His liasons from 1910 to 1920 transgressed family norms and led him into the alien culture of what he called "specifically 'erotic' women." They created unresolvable difficulties. There was, of course, the personal disloyalty to the woman who remained poignantly devoted to him. Beyond this, the adventures challenged his adherence to the asceticism which made the world meaningful and shaped the self into a worthy cultural type — the ideal inherited from his Huguenot forebears and practiced by the women of his family. We should not imagine a conversion experience so much as a never-resolved inner

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inner conflict. Max Weber was neither a Puritan subordinating pleasure to inner and outer conquest, nor a belated follower of the pleasure principle. Near the end of his life, both "Politics as a Vocation" and "Science as a Vocation" continued to urge self-discipline and responsibility on his audience. At the same time, however, they spoke with a knowledge of warring personal demons he knew from his personal experience of eros and ethics in conflict.

V

Roth recounts a debate between Marianne Weber and Georg Simmel over the possibility of female culture. Simmel argued that the dominant public culture — the "objective" culture, as he called it — was historically a male creation; women made their cultural contribution to private and subjective spheres, which they could continue to enrich but would never be able to transcend. Marianne took exception to Simmel's historical pessimism. From her feminist perspective, "objective culture" in the form of modern technology could emancipate women from the household and permit them to take part in public and professional life. She refused to accept Simmel's definition of given cultural forms as male, asserting that women could bring novel points of view to modern learning. Although Simmel's ultimately ontological distinction between male and female culture as objective and subjective appealed to some feminists at the time, Marianne opposed it and insisted on treating the differences as historical and alterable.

Marianne's *Biography* bears out her confidence in women's ability to reshape existing male definitions of culture. It belongs to a genre exemplifying the kind of externalized form she and Simmel were arguing over. A sturdy set of conventions defined it as a genre written by and about men, with a distinctive set of male preoccupations as its subject. Female equivalents flourished where Simmel would have expected to find them, in the diary and family chronicle, and emphasized the personal and subjective dimensions of life he considered distinctly feminine. Yet these oppositions between masculine and feminine were disintegrating cultural artifices.

Marianne belonged to the first generation of German women permitted to cross from private to public roles, and this social fact redefined the traditional understanding of what constituted a "life" for both women and men. We have been accustomed to thinking of her as a slightly anachronistic figure clinging to an outmoded ethical idealism, while her husband vanished over modernist horizons her biography could never bring into view. The Max Weber who appreciated Nietzsche and fell in love with his former student is indeed absent from her book. But it turns out that what Marianne did include was so far in advance of her male readers that "we" are only beginning to comprehend the story she left for us: a revelation of how a male life is never an isolated progress from boyhood to manhood, but a shared history made in that wavering diagonal line between masculine and feminine.

Harry Liebersohn

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Weber and Mann

Harvey Goldman, *Max Weber and Thomas Mann: Calling and the Shaping of the Self* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 284 pp.

"This book has its beginnings with a copy of Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*, bought when I was a student in France and read in Heidelberg, Paris, and Lyon. I love this novel like no other," is how Goldman opens his book. Naturally, this reading event occurred during The Sixties, which brings me to a similar recollection. During lunch break at the factory one day, I was reading through *Ramparts* or *Avant Garde* or some other unlikely rag common to that era and came upon an interview with the already superannuated Peter, Paul and Mary — a folk-singing trio culturally and politically important between about 1962 and 1966 when folk-rock was concocted, quickly leading to their demise. In this long piece, Mary Travers was asked which were her favorite books. According to my memory, she answered: Broch's *Sleepwalkers*, Hesse's *Magister Ludi*, and Mann's *Magic Mountain*. She even disquisitioned upon Hesse for a while; so after work I shot to the library, dusted off these volumes, and began reading. Somehow being 18 or 19 and led to such books by a popular singer says as much to me now about what has happened to mass/high culture in the ensuing 20 years as any single datum: "Michael Jackson, what is your favorite novel and could you describe it for us, its meaning to socio-cultural life and the future of mind in America?"

Thus in many ways Goldman and I are on the same wavelength, with one small difference. In 1968 when I sent in my check for $2.45 to Random House to get *Magic Mountain* in paperback, it changed my ideas about the limits of fiction-writing and also the nature of long-term physical and cultural decay, whereas only 10 years later did I finally read *Doctor Faustus* — a text (*sic*) which I teach regularly in order to liven up my own discipline's conception of "culture." Had I come to Leverkuhn first, instead of Castorp, I may have taken a different route, for the awful hilarity of the former's life — his insane but finally understandable desire to "take back the Ninth Symphony" and substitute something completely unlistenable — all of this is a far cry from the good-natured naivete of Castorp as he hangs out high in the Alps with a crew of Lukácsian dementeds.

It also happens that, while speeding through the 727 pages of *The Magic Mountain*, I was reading for the first of many times Weber's *Protestant Ethic* and related items. Yet the obvious connection between Mann's first novel, *Buddenbrooks*, and Weber's ideas about asceticism and work, seemed both unavoidable

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and invisible: the former, because of German intellectual currents around 1900 that affected all learned people; the latter, because Mann and Weber were so very different in their conception of duty to the craft and to their gender-role. In Mann's *Diaries* he speaks warmly of studying a young gardener's *gluteus maximus*, and carefully holding in check his homophilia, whereas Weber's hyper-macho dueling scar and quick temper in questions of (masculine) honor left no room whatever for that sort of impulse. Yet both men suffered a range of severe psychosomatic troubles — Weber may well have been impotent for a while after his breakdown, or even before, though only Marianne Weber and maybe Else von Richthofen knew, and they did not tell.

One could go on in this way. It all illustrates that Goldman has probably opened a connection that now in the light will seem terribly apparent to everyone who has cherished these two writers, who has had to make room in our post-modern consciousnesses for their strictly modernist, literate, politically engaged intellectualism of the most serious, maniacal kind. Their enormous writings seem to represent what some of us may have aspired to had it not been for Howdie Doodie and the Beatles. Imagine Russell Jacoby introducing Derek Jacoby on American Bandstand and asking him to read from "Tonio Kröger" or "Death in Venice," accompanied to the rear by Bon Jovi and a rank of mostly naked young men and women doing aerobic dance, and at this moment Mann's and Weber's ghosts appear in the wings and are asked to interpret this cultural condition. "Mechanized Brecht" they might say, or "Lulu" without pathos.

It is into this vortext (*sic*) of cultural matter and anti-matter that Goldman finds himself, though he does not worry about bringing his subjects up to date. Instead, he takes apart their earlier works (another volume will handle the later ones) as they reveal their innermost selves *vis à vis* a "calling" and what it meant then to have a "personality." It is fascinating that a "television personality" means precisely the opposite of what Weber intended by the word, just as television is precisely the opposite of literate intelligence. But Goldman does not cross the postmodern barrier into twilight land, which is partly what gives his book its comforting anachronistic flavor and also its Linus-blanket quality, of truth before the end of truth-telling through stories and tracts begun, probably about 20 years ago when, as one of my German professors remarked, "Why bother with those dark writers anyway? Isn't the news around us bleak enough without them?" It is odd but comforting that Goldman does not invoke our own troubles when considering those of Weber/Mann, since they had plenty of their own, and also because theirs seem susceptible to rational action, bravery, ontological control, and the rest of bourgeois melodrama that is no longer in our world. Goldman is not the hip French scholar using Derrida to take apart Montaigne, hunting for codes and lapses into the unspoken/unexpressed traps. He takes his subjects' words at face value, and writes about them in ways they would have understood and appreciated.

Precisely, what Goldman does is simply stated. The book comes in two

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parts: one, on the calling; and the other, on what the word "personality" meant to Weber/Mann explicitly and otherwise. In the first part he carefully examines Weber's *Protestant Ethic*, then turns more carefully to several of Mann's earliest works, including "The Joker," *Buddenbrooks*, and "Tonio Kröger." He summarizes his findings and moves to an interesting sketch of *Bildung* and the personality type that cared about rigorous self-cultivation — from its inception with Kant and Humboldt, into its hyper-refinement with Goethe. Back to Weber, we learn about his approach to the notion of personality as a "center" for rational, ethically-directed action, with reference to some of his colleagues (e.g., Troeltsch), and then in the early essays after "recovery." The most interesting part of this dissection concerns Weber's comparative religion, in which each type of religious virtuosi is evaluated in terms of how well or poorly he (*sic*) embodied an ethic of ultimate ends — what Mann called the *Leistungsethiker*, "the ethical man of work and accomplishment." Goldman recounts Weber's claims about the Calvinist being more suited for this-worldly achievement than other religiously dedicated social actors, but he objects only slightly to Weber's argument. Perhaps he is saving more substantial critique for his second volume. Finally, the book concludes with another chapter on Mann's "prisonhouse of personality" as revealed in letters, *Royal Highness*, "A Difficult Hour" (or "A Weary Hour" in the standard translation) on Schiller's compositional problems at three in the morning, and "Death in Venice," more elaborately and creatively treated than most of the other works. Goldman ends with reflections on redemption and the hope for meaning in the modern era. The writing is clear and imaginative, the references all to the original sources, the notes full and useful; in general, the book looks like and is a serious one of the sort we can now expect from scholars who pursue these topics vigorously.

In order to air my few objections, I return again to that hallowed period which gave both Goldman and me our intellectual peculiarities. A German relative sent me for high school graduation *The Critique of Practical Reason*, for which I was grateful and uncomprehending. Shortly thereafter, during the manifold Troubles, this same well-meaning, intensely moralistic and quasi-Weberian person found me reading Mann and objected strenuously, saying that *Buddenbrooks* was a degenerate novel of that typically disheartening Jewish frame of mind. Delighted I had struck a chord of righteous indignation without even trying, I allowed my elder to elaborate the critique of Mann's celebration of the uncertain, the unnerved, and the hopeless. Since I was enjoying the novel, though indeed struck by the fateful sorrow little Hanno would experience, I was truly surprised at this powerful Lutheran attack on the novel's entire theme. Not until Goldman's book appeared did it occur to me one might well put the two writers in the same box rather than in different colored ones. This is to Goldman's credit, and now that he has pointed out this obvious congruence, it will become a normal feature of our landscape, in the same way that Judith Marcus' *Georg Lukács and Thomas Mann* has done —

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though, of course, Marcus' case was more easily built, since the former revered the latter and wrote about his adoration at length. Such was not the case with Weber and Mann, who, according to Goldman's sources, met twice, neither time privately, and only seven months before Weber's premature death. And neither wrote about the other in any significant way. Mann did pride himself in having anticipated Weber's and Sombart's work on the Protestant ethic in his first novel, *Buddenbrooks*. That is where the overlap ends, and where my objection begins.

Goldman's chapters on Weber are skillful but not very fresh for a Weber expert — of which by now there must be at least 10,000 worldwide — because they recount what we know well about the relation between the Puritan type and the activity that leads to great success in accumulating capital. But it certainly has its uses. For instance, Goldman's first chapter, "Weber and the Puritan Calling," and the accompanying notes is an able antidote to Luciano Pellicani's "Weber and the Myth of Calvinism" (*Telos* 75), which does what it sets out to do brilliantly — to show that not only Calvinists could behave capitalistically. Unfortunately, though, this entirely misses the point that Weber (and Goldman) make. Weber did not care in the end about who started capitalism, and he said so repeatedly. His ideal-typical Calvinist is not a sufficient cause for restructuring Europe's political economy. What he noticed and then did his best to document, given the available data, was that a type of personality came onto the political-economic scene which was extremely weird, that made lots of money, pretended not to, acted bravely in the face of a terrifying God, and in the end behaved "irrationally" by any modern conception of the term. Weber was fascinated, even obsessed (as Goldman puts it) by this (and saw it lived out in somewhat diluted form in his mother), then tried to explain it. The fact that he was assigning all three volumes of *Capital* to his students in the late '90s before his collapse probably showed he was still hanging on to his credentials as a political-economist and historian, but by the time *Roscher and Knies* was ready for the printer (1903-06) he had shed that identity and begun his trek into the social psychology of world religions. He was making himself over into the German William James — with history added. Henry Carey no longer interested him.

Yet for all its concentrated good sense and up-to-the-minute scholarship, will not shock or dismay those who have already made their way through *The Protestant Ethic* and related materials. It is only when he gets to Mann that he seems to breathe easier, feel less sat upon by his subject, and begins to carry on a livelier dialogue with the texts and their author. (Surely a Germanist with publications on Mann might feel precisely the contrary, and prize the Weber treatment more, but so it goes when one is daring enough to mix literature with social "science.") This seems readily understandable when one considers the thorny density and conceptual unknowns in Weber versus the graceful ambiguity and powerful emotional texture of Mann's prose. After all, Mann was a professional entertainer, and knew his audience well enough to win a huge

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following at the age of 25. Weber's prose "style" is an embarrassment except in its compacted strength, its ability to haul the patient reader through more ideas and information per page than is available in almost any other theorist. There are stretches of Mannheim, or Lukács, some Marcuse too, where density is as high, but not even in their work can one find the historical and cross-cultural undergirding that has always set Weber's work off from "mere" social philosophy. In a sense it is forgivable that Goldman reads better when he's dealing with Mann, since the subject presents so many choice items for quotation and parsing. Yet a disturbing feature of Goldman's enterprise is his willingness to take Weber literally and rather unproblematically. Surely there are Mann scholars who find in his fiction (and the important scholarly essays as well) endless ironically inspired confusions that need their attention. But this is different from Weber's unintentional, even unknowing, conceptual tangles. Perhaps out of concern for space, Goldman seems to have minimized legitimate difficulties so that Weber's ideas of calling and the ascetic self come across as much cleaner than they actually are. For instance, Goldman takes care of Weber's tortured excursion into "personality" theory in the *Roscher and Knies* essays with only a couple of pages. A close look at these incredible labors (which seem to me both exercises in self-administered therapy as well as solid intellectual statements) shows how amazingly at sea Weber was about what "personality" meant — not just the ideal-typical Puritan self of renunciation and control, but *any* credible self in the Wilhelmine period of over-fed aestheticism and political irresponsibility. It is admirable up to a point to clarify the opaque for readers probably less accustomed to certain arguments than is the exegete, but it can be a short distance from this kind of cleansing to oversimplification.

A related and more important theoretical cloud hovers near the edge of Goldman's sunny vista. It is entirely clear that this hermeneuticist of Mann and Weber sympathizes with their overall projects and also their most precious personal values and struggles. This is no work of deconstruction or demystification, but instead an appreciative elucidation of a common theme that did not seem perhaps as closely linked in previous scholarship as it now will. In one of few summary statements, Goldman writes: "[T]he generation of personality in any context can only be conceived on the basis of four fundamental conditions. First, there must be the creation or existence of a transcendental-like ultimate goal or value that gives leverage over the world through the tension it creates between the believer and the world. Second, there must be a 'witness' to action that is not social, seeing the 'outer' person but transcendent, regarding the 'inner.' Third, there must be the possibility of salvation or redemption from death or from the meaninglessness of the world and the attainment of a sense of certainty about it. And fourth, there must be no ritual, magical, or external means for relieving one's burden, guilt, or despair. Together these four conditions anchor the sense of meaning and may later provide possibilities that life in an age without religion has otherwise lost." (p. 165)

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This is technically correct, but one waits in vain for the other shoe to drop. Perhaps it will in the second volume of the project. Since Goldman is a political theorist and not a literary critic of the traditional kind, he has a responsibility, however modest, to tie his work to contemporary conditions of life, or so I would argue. If one uninterested in the Wilhelminian context and unimpressed by "dead Germans," as the *ignoranti* often call them, came upon the above quoted paragraph and tried to connect it somehow to our situation, it would seem all the recent fuss over Weber, Mann, *fin de siècle* Vienna, Lukács, Bloch, and the rest is a fool's paradise of nostalgia. Goldman might say he set out only to do exploration in the history of ideas, that is its own reward, and having done a bit of that myself, I understand its importance and appeal. But if ever a time for redefining "self" existed, it is now, when what "selves" there are come in mass marketed packages of predigested, misfitted fragments. The dread distance between the "self" of Mann's protagonists or Weber's ideal-typical virtuosi and what passes for same today would seem to demand some kind of theoretical response in a scholar up to his ears in the material Goldman studied. Yet he leaves it mostly to inference and polite suggestion, and I cannot imagine why. He laid the table for a hearty meal, then forgot to bring in the beast. Still, it is a good book, and one worth having on the shelves. Perhaps the concluding volume will bring us out of that ancient time of coherent, self-destructive selves and into our own.

Alan Sica

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Weber's Political Failure

Max Weber, *Zur Neuordnung Deutschlands. Schriften und Reden 1918-1920*. Vol. 16, *Max Weber Gesamtausgabe*, ed. by Wolfgang J. Mommsen in collaboration with Wolfgang Schwentker (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1988) 643 pp.

As long as we remain interested in Weber's grand themes, there will be controversy about his partisanship and scholarship. In three steps, I would like to: I) comment very briefly on the vast project of the critical edition of Weber's *oeuvre*; II) discuss the latest state of factual knowledge about Weber's politics and to venture a judgment of his political stance; and III) suggest the manner in which his retreat from politics in the last year of his life may have influenced his scholarship and unintentionally facilitated its international reception.

I

The critical edition of Weber's *oeuvre* appears under the general editorship of Horst Baier, M. Rainer Lepsius, Wolfgang J. Mommsen, Wolfgang Schluchter, and the late Johannes Winckelmann, on behalf of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences.[1] While Lepsius has been the driving force behind the complex project, Mommsen has directed a large part of the search for literary remains and correspondence in archives and private holdings. Baier will edit the *Wissenschaftslehre* (Vols. 7 and 12); Schluchter, "Science as a Vocation" and "Politics as a Vocation" (Vol. 17). Winckelmann, who died four years ago at the age of 85, had done 30 years of pioneering editorial work with tenacious convictions that account for the strengths and weaknesses of his one-man undertaking.

The reception of the critical edition has thus far been influenced by the fact that the war-time writings appeared first, focusing the interest on Weber's politics. The world-wide attention paid to Weber's scholarly opus remains, however, the main justification for editing 22 volumes of writings and speeches and several volumes of correspondence. It is no accident that the commercial viability of the enterprise rests on hundreds of Japanese subscriptions, which far exceed those from the US and West Germany. Mommsen's first volume was followed by Martin Riesebrodt's 1984 edition of *Die Verhältnisse der Landarbeiter im ostelbischen Deutschland* [The Conditions of Agricultural Labor in Germany East of the Elbe] (vol. 3). In 1892 this 1000-page research report, based on

1. The Weber edition is paralleled by a number of similar ventures. This year the first two vols. of the Georg Simmel's *Gesamtausgabe*, which will comprise 24 vols., is scheduled to appear. A critical edition of Ernst Troeltsch's *oeuvre* is under way. Two years ago Werner Sombart's *Der moderne Kapitalismus* (1902) was reissued in paperback, accompanied by a volume of commentaries. Even the next generation is finding its editors; witness the editions of Hans Freyer and Arnold Gehlen.

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data collected by others, launched Weber's career as a political economist and policy expert on agrarian and rural settlement matters. His legal and agrarian expertise derived in turn from his second dissertation, *Die römische Agrargeschichte in ihrer Bedeutung für das Staats- und Privatrecht* [Roman Agrarian History in its Significance for Public and Private Law] (1891), which the classicist Jürgen Deininger published in 1986 (Vol. 12). This year Mommsen and Dittmar Dahlmann will publish another political volume, *Zur Russischen Revolution von 1905* (Vol. 10). Also in press is the first volume of correspondence, covering the years 1906-1908, edited by Lepsius and Mommsen. Here some exaggerated expectations abound. The volume will not contain any revelations. Weber was a pragmatic correspondent, and only occasionally poured his thoughts and soul into a letter. For the sake of the record, however, all extant letters (many have been lost) will be printed.

Today Weber's sociology of religion is probably that part of his *oeuvre* that generates the broadest interest. Annual conferences at the Reimers-Foundation on Weber's "Economic Ethics of the World Religions" have brought together experts from all over the world to evaluate the viability of his interpretations. The result has been a series of 6 volumes edited and introduced by Schluchter: on ancient Judaism; early Christianity; Confucianism and Taoism; Hinduism and Buddhism; Islam and the Christian Middle Ages (1981-1988).[2] In 1990 the first part of the essays on world religions will be brought out by the Sinologist Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer: *Konfuzianismus und Taoismus* (Vol. 19); he is also at work on *Hinduismus und Buddhismus* (Vol. 20). Hartmut Lehmann, director of the German Historical Institute in Washington, is responsible for *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*, which will be published in its 1904/5 version, together with the anti-critiques, and in its final 1920 form (Vols. 9 and 18). In all, a quarter of the edition will soon be available, but the enterprise will not be completed until the next century.[3]

II

In the past disputes about Weber's politics, Mommsen's interpretation played a crucial part. His brilliant dissertation of 1959 established for him an instant reputation and notoriety as worthy bearer of a famous name. Revised and expanded in 1974, the book did not appear in English until 1984.[4] If this late

2. See Wolfgang Schluchter, ed., *Max Webers Studie über das antike Judentum: Interpretation und Kritik* (1981); *Max Webers Studie über Konfuzianismus und Taoismus* (1983); *Max Webers Studie über Hinduismus und Buddhismus* (1984); *Max Webers Sicht des antiken Christentums* (1985); *Max Webers Sicht des Islams* (1987); *Max Webers Sicht des okzidentalen Christentums* (1988); all Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp Verlag. Schluchter's introductions to the first 4 vols. will appear in English in his *Rationalism, Religion and Domination: A Weberian Perspective*, trans. by Neil Solomon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

3. For those who cannot afford the very high price of the *Gesamtausgabe*, and that includes most readers, a cheaper, simplified paperback edition was launched last year.

4. Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Max Weber and German Politics 1890-1920*, trans. by Michael S. Steinberg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

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translation threatened to perpetuate an inevitably dated interpretation for English readers, substantive progress was made in the same year in Germany, when Mommsen brought out the long-awaited first volume of the *Max Weber Gesamtausgabe* containing the political writings and speeches during WWI.[5] The present sequel comprises those written during the last two years of Weber's life, 1918 to 1920: divided into Weber texts proper (some 300 pp. with editorial comments); contributions to official policy during the Paris Peace Conference (app. 85 pp.); and newspaper reports about political speeches and discussions (app. 140 pp.). The three appendices contain cosigned appeals and public declarations, three recollections of Weber's ill-fated meeting with Ludendorff, and information about five texts and speeches for which there is neither a text nor a summary from other sources.

Weber's political activities appear now more extensive but also less influential than previously perceived. In the days of dissolution and revolution, he tried his best to make a difference. But he basically failed in his four endeavors — to influence significantly the drafting of the new constitution, to get himself elected to the Weimar national assembly, to help organize an international campaign against the imputation of Germany's war guilt, and to be taken seriously as an adviser at the Paris Peace Conference. External obstacles and his own hesitations and ambivalences proved too great.

In his search for the causes of the German catastrophe after WWII, and under the impact of American reeducation efforts, the young Mommsen (born in 1930) recognized an indirect filiation from Weber's concept of charismatic *Führerdemokratie* to Hitler, via Weber's "natural son" Carl Schmitt, just as others (Richard Rubenstein and lately Zygmunt Bauman) have seen Auschwitz as some kind of emanation of Weber's ideal type of bureaucracy.[6] The mature Mommsen's task has been to collect painstakingly the primary and secondary sources for evaluating Weber's role in the Empire's last years and the Republic's earliest beginnings. Ultimately, the tenability of sweeping attributions of intellectual responsibility and guilt for the course of German history cannot be settled by a close study of such sources. But readers can now test their own views against Mommsen's older position and the newly clarified record.

Although Weber was known for advocating both *Weltpolitik* and parliamentary government before the war, long illness and sustained scholarly work left no time for a significant amount of political activity. This was to change with "the guns of August," when Max, Marianne and Alfred Weber felt the strong pull of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, which very few were able to resist. At the time Marianne gave expression to her enthusiasm and almost mystical possession

5. Max Weber, *Zur Politik im Weltkrieg. Schriften und Reden 1914-1918*, Vol. 15, *Max Weber Gesamtausgabe*, ed. by Wolfgang J. Mommsen in collaboration with Gangolf Hübinger (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1984).

6. Zygmunt Bauman, "Sociology After the Holocaust," in *The British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 39, No. 4 (1988), pp. 470-497.

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in two anonymous accounts in *Die Frau*, the leading journal of the women's movement. Since these are practically unknown and not cited by Mommsen, I would like to call attention to them here. "We have," wrote Marianne, "become one people, and those who stand here are my brothers. I am the one for whom they must do battle, suffer, and die. It is my honor that requires this sacrifice. Ardent love wells up within me. . . . I want to annihilate myself in this community."[7] For my purposes, two features of her outpouring are significant: first, the absence of any sense of guilt about the war; and second, the hope that fate might preserve Max for a national role.

After the Empire's collapse in November 1918, Weber's patriotic excitement reached a fever pitch, especially over the issue of war guilt, at the same time that fate denied him the hoped-for political chance. By and large, his war-time goal had been reasonable: he demanded a compromise peace and urged parliamentary reform, without harboring any fantasies about using the postwar period for preparing a "bigger and better" war. But as a correlate of his demands, he also opposed any working-class protests and pacifist initiatives during the war. He excused Germany's aggression with the argument that great powers have a special responsibility before history, and turned a cheap trick on the pacifists; with superhuman consistency, they were to abide in private and public matters by the Sermon on the Mount.

On this score, Weber intervened in 1916 in *Die Frau* on behalf of its editor against a Swiss pacifist woman.[8] His political prospects shone brightest when Prince Max von Baden, who knew and esteemed him, became Chancellor in October 1918 and parliamentary government was imposed. But Weber's chances were greatly diminished by the revolution's eruption a few days later. This may explain some of the vituperativeness with which he greeted it. Substantively, he bitterly opposed its coming because the soldiers simply quit and went home, thus undercutting his hope for a negotiated peace. Weber was logically correct, but psychologically unrealistic, when he argued that without German divisions Wilson could not fight Clemenceau at the conference table.[9]

Just as the revolution got under way, he appeared before thousands of anxious listeners in Munich on November 4, three days before Kurt Eisner formed the revolutionary government. Speaking for the Progressive People's Party on "Germany's Political Reconstruction," Weber declared far-reaching democratization compatible with retention of the dynasties (but not of William II), and insisted that the parliamentary system just introduced in the Reichstag be extended to the Federal Council, which represented the individual states. He felt no compunction about calling for confiscatory taxes on the propertied classes to pay for the war costs. While condemning the right-wing

7. Marianne Weber, "Erlebnisse der Seele," in *Die Frau*, Vol. 22, No. 5 (1915), p. 258.
8. Weber, "Zwischen zwei Gesetzen," in *Zur Politik im Weltkrieg*, *op.cit.*, pp. 93-98.
9. *Zur Politik im Weltkrieg*, *op.cit.*, p. 642; *Zur Neuordnung Deutschlands*, *op.cit.*, p. 404. From now on cited as vol. 16.

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indoctrination of the army in the war's last phase, he demanded, in the same breath, the political mobilization of the students for the sake of creating an *irredenta* if German territories and populations were to be lost.

From the value position of liberal democracy, Weber's basic intent made sense in the revolutionary situation: to reform the polity and to restore the economy through a constitutional consensus, and antagonistic cooperation between the Social Democratic working class and the liberal bourgeoisie. Urging the quick drafting of a constitution and calling for the speedy convening of a constituent assembly was, of course, tantamount to opposing the councils movement — the spontaneous form the revolution had taken. Such an alliance required building a strong liberal party that could lead a large part of the bourgeoisie. Together with such men as Theodor Heuss, Weber worked hard to create the German Democratic Party, as did also Marianne and Alfred. (Their grand design proved successful only after WWII, when Heuss became the first president of the Federal Republic).

During the war, Weber had established a reputation as constitutional expert through his reform proposals, and immediately after the Empire's collapse he composed five lengthy articles on "Germany's Future Constitution" for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. He certainly deserved to be prominently consulted in the writing of the new constitution. As it turned out, however, his direct contribution was limited to the meeting of the informal advisory council in the Ministry of the Interior, which convened in Berlin December 9-12. Among the dozen members of the council, Weber was the only unaffiliated participant. The protocol, reprinted as a whole, identifies his numerous observations and suggestions. He saw more clearly than the Social Democrats that only a federal, not a unitary, centralized solution was feasible, and he championed the direct election of a president — now the princes were gone — as a counterweight not only to a *Reichstag* elected on a proportional basis but to the individual states with their particularist inclinations. In the end, his drafts were turned into paragraphs 11 and 12 of the Weimar Constitution; they specified modes for the formation of new states and minimum constitutional requirements for states and municipalities (such as the guarantee of direct elections, municipal self-government, and the right to public inquiry). This is not much, but it is also "not insignificant," as Mommsen claims, adding that Weber's views on a directly elected president were taken into account "only in a highly refracted form."[10]

On November 15 the revolutionary government in Berlin — the Council of People's Representatives — had considered appointing Weber Secretary of the Interior in its desperate search for bourgeois experts, but nothing came of this or of later plans. His denunciations of the revolution did not help. There was too much ambivalence on both sides. Weber wanted very much to be consulted, but also did not want to be closely identified with the Council. By contrast, he put all his effort into the German Democratic Party, taking it for granted he

10. Vol. 16, p. 10f.

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would represent its constitutional views in the national convention. Showing astonishing physical stamina, he proved to be an effective and dedicated campaigner. The dozen speeches he delivered in Berlin, Frankfurt, Heidelberg and other cities are reproduced here from partly divergent newspaper accounts collected for the first time. Weber did not abandon his speechmaking when he was shocked to learn that "party notables" had demoted him to an unwinnable position on the party's lists less than three weeks before the elections to the Weimar constituent assembly of January 19, 1919[11] Paradoxically, among party officials he was hurt by the fact that his speeches, which he considered propagandistic exercises, made him appear closer to socialist demands than was true of his private convictions, especially in regard to socialization.

In spite of his public denial, failure to be elected to the Weimar assembly was a tremendous blow to Weber (his wife could at least help to write the new constitution of Baden as a member of that state's constituent assembly). After the Weimar elections a wounded Weber withdrew from his public role in party politics. But when Friedrich Ebert was elected president by the national assembly in February 1919, Weber, carrying his arguments beyond his party's position, demanded the direct election of the next president in the prestigious *Berliner Börsenzeitung*. He used the occasion for a scathing attack on rule by party notables, which had blocked his own election to the convention. He intervened one more time in the constitutional deliberations with an article not previously discussed in the literature, "Unitarismus, Partikularismus, und Föderalismus in der Reichsverfassung." Reversing his emphasis in the December meetings, he now warned of going too far in the matter of states' rights.

Weber's final disappointment concerned his futile role in the Paris Peace Conference. This was a brutal experience, especially for someone who had only recently extolled the sense of responsibility and proportion in "Politics as a Vocation." Mommsen, who treated this episode rather briefly in his early study, has reconstructed for the first time the extremely complicated history of the so-called "Professors' Memorandum." Like many others, Weber feared any concession to the allied governments on the issue of war guilt would legitimate the exactions of the peace treaty. He found especially unacceptable the impending loss of areas with a predominantly German population, and pointed to it as a violation of Wilson's proclamation of the right of national self-determination. Here his basic perception of the war's meaning combined with tactical considerations to make him a bitter and unjust opponent of anyone willing to consider Germany's guilt. For Max as for Marianne the war was "fate, not guilt," as she put it in 1915: "Nobody wanted the war, nobody wanted to harm another people. If our hands are now soiled with the blood of thousands whom we do not hate and who too are guiltless, we still will face the ultimate judgment (*Weltgericht*) with a pure heart."[12]

11. See Weber's anguished public statement in vol. 16, p. 156.
12. Marianne Weber, "Erlebnisse der Seele," *Die Frau*, *op. cit.*.

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Although the Webers were by 1918 thoroughly disillusioned about the war's ennobling effects, they did not significantly change their position. If the war was an affair of honor, rejecting guilt was a requisite of dignity. Weber vehemently attacked those pacifist and socialist intellectuals who had wanted to end the war unconditionally and were now willing to concede Germany's responsibility. In particular, he lashed out against Kurt Eisner. As early as November 23, 1918, Eisner had released Bavarian diplomatic documents that seemed to point to Imperial Germany's primary guilt. Thus, as Marianne put it in her biography of Max, he "supplied the enemy with material for the 'war-guilt lie'."[13] While the revolutionery government in Berlin called for a neutral board of inquiry, Weber treated the question of war guilt in his campaign speeches. On January 17, 1919, one day before the beginning of the Paris Peace Conference, he addressed the topic programmatically in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, apparently in coordination with the Foreign Office. He tried to direct attention to underlying causes and away from individual actions that might have triggered the war. On the structural level all countries, but especially Russia, appeared culpable. Moreover, Weber endeavored to shift the focus from "guilt for the past" to the allied governments' "responsibility for the future" (*Schuld an der Zukunft*). Foreign reactions were negative. A column in the Basel *Nationalzeitung* lambasted him for blaming other countries more than Germany: "Never will Weber or Naumann or Solf — we purposely mention only the moderates, the democrats, those who are conciliatory and not imperialist — comprehend that there is only one hope for Germany, and that it would be found only on the road chosen by Lichnowsky, Förster and Eisner."[14]

Next, Weber chaired a meeting in his home on February 3-4, at which Prince Max von Baden established a "Working Group for Ethical Politics," soon renamed "Toward a Politics of Right." This select group of some twenty politicians, businessmen and scholars was to conduct a propaganda campaign abroad in favor of a "peace of right," not a "peace of force." It was not successful. Weber's participation in the group and von Baden's sponsorship resulted, however, in his being chosen to join the German delegation in Paris, where he reached both the high and the low point of his political career. Favoring a hardline position, Weber went with grave doubts and returned in utter frustration. With two other members of the Heidelberg group, Count Max Montgelas and Albrecht Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, reenforced by the historian Hans Delbrück, Weber was supposed to legitimate the so-called "Professors' Memorandum" — a rebuttal of the allied governments' statement on Germany's sole war guilt. The four "experts" were caught in a bitter conflict between the Berlin cabinet and the German Foreign Minister and main negotiator in Paris, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, who was convinced that only a successful rebuttal, rather

13. Marianne Weber, *Max Weber: A Biography*, trans. by Harry Zohn (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1988), p. 634.

14. Vol. 16, p. 178.

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than evasion, could ease conditions for Germany. The four nominal advisers were largely kept in the dark about the intense infighting, since they were expected to lend their name, not their judgment, to a document already drafted in Berlin. Actually, just as in the preparatory meeting in Berlin, Weber's expertise was put to work immediately after his arrival in Paris on May 16, but in matters of the eastern territories and the question of plebiscites in areas disputed with the emergent Polish state. In the end the four did not just affix their signatures to the text; while the German delegation and the Berlin cabinet quarreled, they argued among themselves. The result was a compromise that did not satisfy anybody. Weber's hand can be detected at various places, but contrary to Winckelmann's old view, the final product cannot be considered a text edited mainly by Weber. In direct violation of his instructions from Berlin, Brockdorff-Rantzau sent the memorandum from "a commission of independent Germans" to Clemenceau on May 28, the day Weber left Paris in great sadness. He wrote to Mina Tobler: "Champs Elysées, Boulevards, Madeleine, Opéra, etc., I saw it, in all its glitter, for the last time in my life! Unforgettable."[15] Although tinged with regret, this was a reaction of patriotic defiance. Weber had no intention of returning; he did not know he had only one more year to live.

Thus ended Max's foray into politics; Marianne went on to become president of the German Women's Federation in the Fall of 1919. The federation was particularly active in organizing patriotic resistance in the threatened border areas and occupied territories.[16] Together with the majority of liberal nationalists on its board, Marianne opposed the Versailles Treaty in various ways. But in June 1920 — the month of Max's death — the famous social welfare teacher, Alice Salomon, Marianne's vice-president, resigned in protest against the federation's refusal to attend the first postwar meeting of the Internation Council of Women in neutral Norway. She belonged to a tiny minority of isolated internationalists. It is true that Weber would have put himself outside the pale had he enlarged his critic's role and seriously considered Germany's guilt. There would have been no articles in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, no campaign for the German Democratic Party, no supernumerary role at Versailles. Instead of merely attracting right-wing student protesters in front of his house in Heidelberg and in the lecture hall in Munich, he might have attracted the bullet that killed Eisner, his *bête noire*. But it is also true that the republic could have found an ethically viable "responsibility before history" only if democratic liberals like Weber had seen a way to reconcile themselves with independent socialists like Eisner, who with much *Zivilcourage* had braved prison and hunger even before 1914. In contrast to Weber, Eisner had regretted his support for the war after a few weeks and had begun to study seriously

15. Cited in Mommsen, *Max Weber and German Politics*, *op.cit.*, p. 320.

16. See, for instance, Dorothee von Velsen, "Oberschlesisches Tagebuch," in *Die Frau*, Vol. 28: No. 1 (1920), pp. 209-215; see also her autobiography, *Im Alter die Fülle. Erinnerungen* (Tübingen: Wunderlich, 1956).

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all the available evidence about the responsibilities for the war. A few days before his assassination on February 21, 1919, he dramatically proclaimed his conviction of Germany's guilt and his hopes for a new era of international understanding at the socialist congress in Bern. It was his tragedy that his plea, which was also intended to mitigate the peace terms, appeared unacceptable to both the German public and to Clemenceau, if for different reasons.[17]

Weber was well acquainted, if not close, to some of those who cooperated with Eisner. Even a liberal like Lujo Brentano, whose chair Weber proudly inherited, joined Eisner's socialization commission, if only briefly. Edgar Jaffé, who had bought the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* for Weber in 1904, and was still his co-editor, served as Minister of Finance in Eisner's revolutionary cabinet. But he was also the estranged husband of Else von Richthofen, for whose sake Weber accepted the chair in Munich in 1919. In this case personal proximity may have aggravated the political distance. As is well-known, Weber was willing to come to the rescue of left-wing intellectuals and scholars (as long as he knew them beforehand). He rushed to Munich when Arthur Salz was arrested, and he testified in court for Otto Neurath and Ernst Toller. But he dramatized his political differences with the help of the distinction between the two ethics. Thus he at once excused and denigrated Toller by testifying that he combined "absolute purity of intentions with unusual ignorance of political and economic realities."[18] Toward Liebknecht and Luxemburg he remained unforgiving: "Liebknecht belongs in the insane asylum and Rosa Luxemburg in the zoo," he exclaimed in an election speech on January 4, 1919.[19] Two days after their vicious murder on January 15, he felt constrained to say: "We need not waste any words about the disgraceful way in which Rosa Luxemburg ended. That must be the reaction of every decent human being. Only a regular court would have the right to condemn them."[20] He could have said more.

Weber also did not relent on Eisner. His last political contretemps occurred in January 1920, when a mass meeting of students successfully demanded a pardon for Eisner's murderer, Count Arco. Weber agreed the victim had brought great shame (*Schande*) over the country, but he wanted the death sentence to stand so that Eisner would not appear as a "martyr" and his "haunting ghost" could be laid to rest under Arco's tombstone. Weber's contorted reasoning so confused some students that they mistook him for a Jew and promptly shouted anti-Semitic slogans at him.

By that time Weber had begun to worry about the German files. In August 1919, as a member of the commission of four experts at Versailles, he had

17. Kurt Eisner, *Schuld und Sühne*, *Flugschrift*, Nr. 12 (Berlin: Bund Neues Vaterland, 1919). Other contributors to this pacifist series were Helene Stöcker and Walther Borgius. Before the war the Webers had fought these two as leaders of the "new ethic" of sexual liberation. See my introduction to Marianne Weber, *Max Weber*, *op.cit.*, p. xxviii.
18. Vol. 16, p. 489.
19. *Ibid.*., p. 441
20. *Ibid.*, p. 461.

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signed another denunciation of Eisner, but in October he confessed privately to Delbrück that "although Eisner's behavior remains inexcusable, I must admit that they [the files unearthed by him] remain very unpleasant. I feel some dread about our official records."[21] Too late did Weber become disillusioned with Ludendorff, and only after a tense personal showdown immediately after his return from Paris: "I now understand why the world fights back when people like him walk roughshod over it." In turn, Ludendorff recalled that, in contrast to Weber's manipulative words, "his eyes spoke hatred, just as did that Jew Nathan who asked me in Kowno during the war to give rights to the Lithuanian Jews." After all that Weber had said and done, he remained for Ludendorff a "traitor to the fatherland."[22]

What can we finally say about Max and Marianne Weber's politics? The objective facts of Versailles — peace terms both too harsh for reconciliation and not severe enough for repression — and the subjective facts — a German elite and mass public opinion that, after years of war-time propaganda, could not accept any notion of Germany's guilt — combined to fatally weaken the Republic. The Webers were more than *Vernunftrepublikaner*, but they were part of the overwhelming majority of Germans whose sense of dignity and honor felt violated. The crucial blind spot of liberals like Weber was their inability, caused by ingrained nationalism, to suspect that Germany might share the main burden of guilt, and this in turn later paralyzed many of them *vis-à-vis* Hitler's drive to "turn the peace treaty into a meaningless scrap of paper," to use Weber's own words in describing his political goal in the classroom in June 1919.[23] In my judgment, it is on this concrete historical level, not on the level of ideational filiation, that we can speak of a liberal failure.

III

How do we get from Weber the frustrated politician to Weber the driven scholar? I would like to suggest that Weber's return to single-minded scholarship was not only an act of renunciation in an obvious sense, but in some way also a continuation of his political war with other means. In his theory of political responsibility as well as in his scholarly praxis he articulated *die neue Sachlichkeit* (new objectivity") for the 1920s. The term has always been ambiguous, but it was used not only in the arts but also in politics and the *Geisteswissenschaften*.[24] It connotes a stance of emotional detachment, personal distance, self-control, cool observation, "value-neutrality," letting the facts speak for themselves. It is an objectivity that wants to unmask reality. The new objectivity claimed to be the obverse of the old expressionism, but under a clear surface passion and judgment

21. *Ibid.*., pp. 31 and 352 ff.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 546.
23. Cited in Eduard Baumgarten, ed., *Max Weber. Werk und Person* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1964), p. 716.
24. See Eva Karcher, *Otto Dix 1891-1969. Leben und Werk* (Cologne: Benedikt Verlag, 1988), pp. 7 f.

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were barely contained. For many years Weber had puzzled over "objectivity" and "value-freedom" — he always used the quotation marks — in the social sciences. Objectivity was acute personal awareness of one's own subjectivity. If Rudolf Stammler indeed ever called Weber the "most objective subjectivist,"[25] the reverse is also true; he was the most subjective objectivist, employing objectivity for ulterior purposes. After losing the "Great War" and the little war of party politics, he pursued scholarship with a vengeance.

The intermediate step in Weber's turn toward scholarship were two related speeches in Munich, the famous "Politics as a Vocation" of January 28 and the practically unknown "Student and Politics" of March 13, 1919. Weber agreed to the former only after students threatened to invite Eisner instead. The speech reflected the latest political events no less than Weber's crushing personal defeat, and it repeated several of his campaign themes and favorite formulations, from his attack on party notables to the necessity of plebiscitary election, from "responsibility before history" to the "polar night of icy darkness." Although he declared his address to be non-political, he could not refrain from attacking his enemies on the Left as examples of *Gesinnungsethik*, the ethic of single-minded commitment. It is striking, however, that he did not come up with any positive contemporary examples for the ethic of responsibility with its three requirements. While political passion reigned supreme, nobody seemed to retain a sense of responsibility and proportion. In truth, whereas Weber felt displaced from the political arena by "madmen" from Right and Left,[26] his own political judgment was often clouded.

Still, Weber managed to extricate himself. In the significantly expanded (printed) version of "Politics as a Vocation," he gave a sociological account of the development of the modern state and modern politics, leaving a bare dozen pages for the two ethics. By adding historical depth and shifting to a formal level of ethical analysis, he made it possible for later readers, especially American social scientists, to disregard or remain unaware of the political context. At the same time, he provided a pragmatic lesson. That "politics means a strenuous slow drilling of hard boards" is today known by every political journalist in West Germany, and Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and his opponents in the peace movement could resort to Weber's two ethics in their clash over American missile placements in the early 1980s.[27]

According to the newspaper account of "Student and Politics" — the only extant record — Weber, who was at the point of accepting Brentano's chair in economics, bade farewell to politics, since it was too difficult to play an effective political and scholarly role at the same time. For the sake of democratization, he called for narrowing the traditional German gulf between the *Akademiker and*

25. *Vol. 16, p. 413.*
26. *Ibid.*, p. 273.
27. See my essay, "Max Weber's Ethics and the Peace Movement Today," *Theory and Society*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (1984), pp. 491-511.

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the vast majority of citizens who had not attended the university. He criticized the exclusive fraternities no less than the academic literati — with their vanity and lack of responsibility.

In the twelve months Weber had to live, he unknowingly reenforced the ground for his posthumous scholarly fame. He not only revised *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* and "The Economic Ethics of the World Religions," but radically reworked *Economy and Society*. At the outbreak of the war, he had almost finished the sprawling manuscript (now Part II). He decided to replace it with a much shorter volume of tightly structured definitions and categories, leaving the disposition of some of the older sections, such as the sociology of law and "The City," open. There were practical reasons for getting the manuscript out in a hurry after so many years of delay. He could have revised and shortened the extant text rather than begin from scratch, a time-consuming enterprise. In my view, the new manuscript can be read as a declaration of war on all the forces that had frustrated him: radicalized students; literati-in-politics; the hugely popular philosophers of history, such as the academic outsider Oswald Spengler, who offered, as Weber extracted from him, *Dichtung* instead of *Wahrheit*. Weber fully expected readers "to shake their heads."[28]

Weber's "new objectivity" insisted on clear definitions and sharply delineated categories in preference to vivid descriptiveness, narrative coherence, and historical meaning. His first lecture course, beginning in June 1919, dealt with "the most general categories of *Gesellschaftswissenschaft*." As he had deliberately disappointed many of his listeners' expectations in speaking formally about "politics as a vocation," so he now said of the students: ". . . they will drop out soon: I speak abstractly, purely conceptually — intentionally."[29] And they did drop out in large numbers. Plessner recalled a "veritable demonstration of inner-worldly asceticism . . . pure definitions and [formal] explanations: like a very dry wine."[30] Horkheimer lamented: "The lecture hall was overcrowded, but there was deep disappointment . . . we listened for two or more hours to carefully weighed definitions of the Russian system, astutely contrived ideal types, with the help of which the Soviet order might be analyzed. Everything was so precise, so scientifically rigorous, so value-free that we went home very sad."[31] However, Weber

28. Marianne Weber, *Max Weber*, *op.cit.*, pp. 675 f. In a letter of Nov. 8, 1919, Weber announced to to his publisher a further delay in sending parts of *Economy and Society* "exactly because I give the matter the 'didactic' form I consider appropriate in order to *finally* deal with 'sociology' in a *sachlich-wissenschaftliche* manner instead of the dilettante contributions of *geistreiche* philosophers." Partially cited in Johanness Winckelmann, *Max Webers hinterlassenes Hauptwerk* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1986), p. 47.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 664.

30. Helmuth Plessner in René König and Johannes Winckelmann, eds., *Max Weber zum Gedächtnis* (Cologne: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1963), p. 34.

31. Max Horkheimer in Otto Stammer, ed., *Max Weber and Sociology Today*, trans. by Kathleen Morris (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 51 (translation altered). Horkheimer may have referred to the 1920 course on *Staatslehre*.

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also found listeners who had an impression very different from the young Horkheimer. For Jörg von Kapher "he was *sachlich* through and through. The whole heroism of *Sachlichkeit*, which can be called the heroism of our age, came alive in him. . . . His personal relation with us was based on *Sachlichkeit* as well, and for that very reason it was infinitely valuable to us."[32]

Thus the political and the scholarly stance of "objectivity" remained closely related. Weber looked for a small elite to train in the spirit of a "new objectivity." As early as November 1918, he wrote to the classicist Otto Crusius: "Massive problems of education, then. The method: only the American club system, no matter for what purpose. . . . Rejection of intellectual narcotics of all kinds, from mysticism to 'expressionism': [I advocate] *Sachlichkeit* as the only means of integrity and the development of a sense of *Scham* — in the face of the loathsome exhibitionism of those inwardly broken."[33] In both languages the terms shame and *Scham* are ambiguous, comprising the range from coverup to guilt. Mistaking the war for a cricket match among gentlemen, Weber demanded dignified bearing on the part of the loser. But his call was not really that naive and innocuous: in essence, he asked Germans to feel shame not over the war guilt but over admitting it.

Whatever Weber's own ambivalences and contradictions, his brand of patriotism and his kind of objectivity were quickly overtaken by other forces in the 1920s. In 1932, in the Republic's twilight, Theodor Heuss published a (forgotten) book about "Hitler's Road." He declared that "the birthplace of the National Socialist Movement was not Munich but Versailles," and that, since the summer of 1919, the time lapsed had strengthened rather than weakened the political impact of the treaty. Being ever Weber's pupil, he concluded that "as a movement National Socialism is a rebellion against institutional order, the rationally formulated program, the written word, the '*neue Sachlichkeit*'. . . . People follow not the *Sache* but the man; they do not believe in principle but in the *Führer*. He offers more meaning."[34]

Hitler's seizure of power eclipsed Weber in Germany, as Stalinism did in Russia,[35] but paradoxically opened up the Western world for him. We have no evidence that the embittered liberal nationalist had the slightest inkling of his coming world fame, that it would spread in the lands of "Germany's enemies" with whom he debated in English during his deathbed delirium.[36] After all, here was a German scholar who wrote only for a small audience of educated (*gebildete*) readers and, unlike Marx and Engels, had no international agenda. Although the "sea change," as H. Stuart Hughes has called the intellectual migration

32. Marianne Weber, *Max Weber*, *op.cit.*, p. 663.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 636.
34. Theodor Heuss, *Hitlers Weg* (Stuttgart: Union Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1932), pp. 152 and 168.
35. Cf. Johannes Weiss, *Weber and the Marxist World*, trans. by Elizabeth King-Utz and Michel King (London: Routledge and Chapman Hall, 1986).
36. Marianne Weber, *Max Weber: A Biography*, *op.cit.*, p. 698.

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and political emigration of central European thought across the Atlantic, has often been described, Weber's case remains more difficult to explain than Freud's or Wittgenstein's.[37] Of course, there were the political refugees, but Weber was only part of their *vade mecum*; there was Parsons, who had accidentally found himself in Heidelberg long after the American pilgrimage to the shrine of German science had ended. In the wake of WWII there were the intellectual needs of American, and somewhat later of international, social science for an institutionally and comparatively based comprehension of the world. Weber's own crucial contribution to his posthumous impact lay in the way in which he disaggregated the evolutionism and developmentalism of his contemporaries in the direction of a truly comparative historical sociology.[38] The severely formal recasting of *Economy and Society* helped to transcend its historical and theoretical context, and invited a long series of useful adaptations and "creative misinterpretations" during its international reception. The first chapter of the new manuscript lent itself as a starting-point to a large literature on social action, beginning with Parsons and Schutz. It is true that the second chapter, the sociological categories of economic action, proved a waste of effort, although Weber poured much ingenuity and energy into it, composing as long a chapter as I and III combined. With very few exceptions, such as Poggi, economists and sociologists have ignored it. But the third chapter, the sociology of domination, also proved an international success. It was the only one for which Weber could draw extensively on the old manuscript, which Marianne rescued by claiming (mistakenly) that the two versions of *Economy and Society* make a whole. Thus the way was open for Parsons to appropriate the new version for his purposes, together with *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, and for emigrés such as Gerth and Bendix to insist on the importance of the old version and of "The Economic Ethics of the World Religions."

At the end of his life, then, Weber flaunted his scholarly objectivity as a political gesture to such an extent that it influenced the form of his scholarship. But no matter how deeply Germany's troubles affected his feelings, this did not change significantly the substance of his scholarly thought, which had matured before the Great War.

Guenther Roth

37. H. Stuart Hughes, *The Sea Change: The Migration of Social Thought 1930-1965* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 32.

38. See my essay, "Rationalization in Max Weber's Developmental History," in Scott Lash and Sam Whimster, eds., *Max Weber, Rationality and Modernity* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1987), pp. 75-91.

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Weber's Methodology

Guy Oakes, *Weber and Rickert. Concept Formation in the Cultural Sciences*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988), 190 pp.

For seventy years, so reflects the author of this *tour de force*, commentators have only interpreted Weber's methodology in various ways; the point, however, is to assess its soundness. The weary scholar is inclined to applaud the sentiment but remains wary: after all, judging the validity of this logic of science requires some understanding of its claims, and thus some grappling with the accumulated secondary literature. Oakes, of course, knows only too well how easy it is to get lost in these woods turned into printed matter, and sneakily tries to detour around them. His strategy is to show (1) that Weber framed the problem central to his methodology (the problem of the "objectivity" of social, i.e., historical, science) on the basis of premises identical with Rickert's; (2) that Rickert, addressing the same problem proposed a solution that is unconvincing, to say the least; (3) that Weber did not commit himself to this solution, although it seems entailed by his Rickertian premises; and (4) that instead he embraced an alternative position (that is also incapable of supporting a claim of the objectivity of social science).

Oakes, unlike all too many interpreters, is thoroughly conversant with the German literature that forms the background to Weber's methodological essays. His book is free of the glaring blunders and perpetual misconceptions that mar so many of the secondary accounts; it is also an extremely condensed treatise that presumes a great deal on the part of the reader. Obviously familiar with obscure debates and other arcana into which one has to be initiated to find one's way through the maze of Weber's methodological meanderings, Oakes strips the issues to their bare bones. The results are presented in the form of a desiccated discourse comparable in charm to a naked light bulb. However, there can be no doubt that this is an authoritative scholarly production. Oakes's stature in the field recommends a careful reading.

Rickert's Value Theory

Weber's methodological views are based on premises and considerations that show close affinity to Rickertian arguments, although the precise extent of the agreement is a matter of debate. Rickert's philosophy of science, however, was designed specifically to permit the demonstration of the scientific character of history, i.e., of history's capacity to provide "objective" knowledge. For his purposes, Rickert defined "objective" as "universally considered worth knowing" and devised a perspective within which exclusive claims for

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the natural sciences' objectivity could be rejected as ill-founded. The crucial features of this perspective may be summarized as follows:

(a) Scientific knowledge is declared to be the outcome of a two-tiered process of *forming* prepredicative contents of consciousness. Rickert thus operates with a form-content distinction. In his schema, prepredicative contents (elements of an experienced but cognitively not apprehended inchoate flux of sensations) are, in a first cognitive step, given "categorical" or "constitutive" forms (such as "existence" or "causality") and in this fashion turned into empirical "reality," i.e., constituted as "facts." In a second step, the totality of facts is given "methodological" form, that is, subjected to scientific "concept formation."

(b) Everything that human beings do besides those behaviors controlled by causal necessity they do because they accept certain values as valid. Their commitment to a value makes them "interested" in doing certain things. The cognitive process of science is governed by "truth" which, according to Rickert, is such a value. His conception seems to be that stating (judging) what is the case, that a certain state of affairs exists (that something is a fact, is real), must be interpreted as the acting out of a commitment to truth. Prepredicative contents of consciousness, in other words, are given the form of existence, are constituted as concrete empirical reality, because acceptance of the value of truth makes this form-content combination obligatory for the cognizing subject. "Fact is what I ought to think [as real]."[1]

(c) If truth is a value that obligates the cognizing subject to give prepredicative contents of consciousness the form of existence (to constitute concrete empirical reality), then commitment to this value would seem to demand that all the facts be stated. Rickert indeed acknowledges that an exhaustive statement of all the facts represents the ideal of knowledge; but he declares it unattainable because of the limited nature of the human mind. While ideally everything is worth knowing, this democratic attitude toward the components of concrete empirical reality must in fact be replaced by a meritocratic one, so to speak.

(d) The inevitable selectivity of the most comprehensive knowledge of empirical reality accessible to human beings raises the question of how to decide what is worth knowing. Rickert claims that there definitely is a way of reducing the extensive (quantitative) and intensive (qualitative) infinity of concrete reality to finite proportions. There is a (dual) procedure, compliance with which will result in a body of knowledge that in its totality represents the closest humanly possible approximation to the ideal of complete knowledge. As the best approximation, it must be preferred by everyone committed to truth; it comprises not an arbitrary collection of facts but a set considered worth knowing by everyone (who is committed to truth).

(e) Rickert specifies that the infinity of concrete reality can be overcome through the application, in separate types of investigation, of two principles

1. Heinrich Rickert, *Der Gegenstand* der Erkenntnis, 6th ed. (Tüningen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1928), p. 216.

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identifying in a general fashion the kind of fact that is worth knowing: generalizing abstractions (which involves disregarding everything except what sets of phenomena have in common) and individualizing abstraction (which disregards everything except what accounts for the uniqueness of one phenomenon).

(f) Generalizing and individualizing abstraction are, for Rickert, methods of concept formation. From a methodological viewpoint, all science is concept formation. Concept formation, however, is a matter of deciding whether or not certain facts should be part of scientific knowledge. It does not concern the constitution of facts.

(g) The application of generalizing concept formation typically leads to a focus on those aspects of reality that substantively characterize the subject matter of the natural sciences, i.e., (phenomena of) "nature." Individualizing concept formation typically entails a focus on things with which the historical sciences are preoccupied, i.e., (unique phenomena of) "culture." The focus in each type of science on a different kind of subject matter is entirely the consequence of the application of its distinctive method of concept formation.

(h) The validity of the two methods of concept formation is crucially dependent on their ability to single out a limited sector of concrete reality that can justifiably be considered eminently worth knowing. In the case of individualizing or historical concept formation, the identification of this sector requires a principle of "value relevance": elements of reality are selected as worth knowing because they form a unique constellation that from the viewpoint of a cultural value stands out from the rest of reality.

(i) The principle of value relevance trades on the fact that scientists are also practical actors and, as such, accept a variety of cultural values as valid. Accepting a cultural value as valid means going along with a demand placed upon the members of a society or civilization that a particular field of human endeavor be considered worthy of cultivation. However, people who acknowledge such a value in principle need not, and frequently do not, agree on the specific interpretation of this value. Thus, while the family may generally be held to be a worthy thing, there may yet be sharply conflicting views on whether it should be patriarchal or egalitarian, whether divorce should be possible, how much authority parents should have over their children, etc.. Valuational issues of this sort (i.e., clashing practical evaluations or value judgments), however, always concern the specific ordering of a domain of reality that (as a result of prior value-guided practical activity by historical actors) is already uniquely structured and thus throw a unique constellation of facts into relief. When this configuration is considered not as something to be subjected to valuation and active preservation or transformation but merely as a configuration-thrown-into-relief, it is treated as value relevant. A properly formed historical concept provides an account of such a constellation and its historical emergence, and it can lay claim to "objectivity" insofar as everybody (by virtue of his quality as a cultural being) accepts, interprets, and implements cultural values and therefore considers the

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unique constellation at issue a phenomenon eminently worth knowing.

(j) There are two complications, however. The first relates to the fact that cultural issues are ever changing, that correspondingly ever different empirical aspects and configurations move into the limelight, and that therefore ever different historical developments become interesting. Accordingly, the question arises concerning which one of the possibly infinite number of historical accounts is the truly "objective" one (i.e., worthiest to be known). The second relates to the question of the validity of cultural values. The objectivity of historical knowledge requires that a sector of reality be identified as value relevant. Value relevance, however, to be more than a function of subjective whim, must presuppose the validity of cultural values. What if their validity could be doubted? The implications would be fateful; for if these values are not genuinely valid, they cannot be relied on to demarcate a sector of reality as worth knowing, and therewith there could be no objective historical knowledge.

Weber's Logic of Science

How do Weber's views compare with Rickert's? There is some evidence of congruence. Not only is Weber centrally concerned with the objectivity of historical knowledge; he quite clearly avails himself of the arguments and considerations described above under (a)-(c). More questionable, however, is whether he accepts the justification of the bifurcation of cognitive interest into two types of concept formation as the closest humanly attainable approximation to the ideal of complete knowledge (d). Oakes ignores the issue — a fact less important in itself than as an indication of a more pervasive problem: The ambiguity of Oakes' reading of Weber's methodology in terms of the distinction between *context of discovery* and *context of justification*.

It is clear that Rickert's argument (at least in its intention) is one concerning justification. His peculiar and basic question is: What deserves (or ought) to be known? His strategy in answering it is based on giving the form of consciousness primacy over the content. Science is viewed as the application of a method of concept formation to the whole of empirical reality. As a method of abstraction, concept formation is a method of reducing this reality, of discarding facts; only certain facts are preserved. Concept formation thus works like a strainer: Only what has enough substance is retained. Methodologically speaking, therefore, the substantive identity or quality of a science's subject matter emerges not before abstraction but after. However, as a methodical way of favoring certain facts over others, abstraction (concept formation) *is always of a certain kind*, and as such requires justification; epistemologically, it can neither be taken for granted nor can it be legitimated by its success in reducing the infinity of reality to manageable proportions. Insofar as it is a certain kind of abstraction it embodies a certain cognitive interest, and it is precisely this interest that must be justified as worth pursuing. Obviously this justification cannot be derived from the subject matter; it can only come from a value (whose designation of a formally circumscribed kind

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of reality as worth knowing determines in turn the identity of the subject matter).

Oakes, who is of course aware of this Rickertian train of thought (e)-(g), does not seem to think he should be guided by it in his understanding of Weber's fragmented pronouncements. Focusing instead on "nature" and "culture" as the different subject matters of the natural and cultural sciences, he organizes his interpretation of Weber's methodology around the question of the "constitution" of these subject matters through concept formation. He formulates this question as one of "the conditions under which" a phenomenon qualifies as a natural or cultural fact. Unfortunately, this is not a happy formulation. While it may be understood as a question concerning justification and asking for reasons ("What justifies a fact as worth knowing?"), it can also be understood as one concerning explanation and asking for causes ("What explains the inclusion of a particular fact in a particular kind of science?"). ". . . [A] phenomenon falls within the domain of the natural sciences only if its essential features — those in which we take a cognitive interest and regard as worth knowing — are nomological," says Oakes ambiguously. Or: ". . . [T]he issue concerns the conditions under which certain facts qualify as a cultural phenomenon . . . : some cultural datum which, if identified as such, constitutes a possible object of the cultural sciences. The problem . . . may be understood as a question about the criteria that govern certain kinds of description. . . . The problem may also be understood as a question about the criteria that must be satisfied by a certain set of facts," etc.

Oakes' blurring of the line between *context of discovery* and *context of justification* is not a trivial lapse. From the beginning, he hedges on the question of the congruence between Weber's and Rickert's logic of science, and not without reason, as it gradually becomes clear. For there is a strand of thought in the secondary literature that, uncoupling Weber's logic of science from Rickertian foundations, gives it an anthropological slant: Weber is to have rested his methodology on a philosophical anthropology of man as a cultural being. Oakes' sympathy with such a view is obvious. From such a perspective, however, a logic of science easily slides into the realm of a psychology or sociology of science, and justification is replaced by explanation.

Without being explicit about it, Oakes's interpretation is not without its presuppositions. It is also not without its errors. Not surprisingly, these occur in the context of an effort to crack one of the tougher nuts rolling out of the Weber/Rickert cornucopia of problems: the notion of value relevance (i). Having posed the question of what "constitutes an item as a datum of the cultural sciences," Oakes answers that it must be a subjectively meaningful phenomenon that is considered significant (i.e., is given a "cultural meaning") because of its relevance to the historians' values: the infinite manifold of the phenomena to which historical actors, on the basis of their ideas and ideals, ascribe "subjective meanings" is reduced to finite size through ideal types that "identify certain aspects of the subjectively meaningful . . . life of the historical actors . . . as

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meaningful on the basis of criteria for value relevance . . . entailed by the interests of the cultural sciences. These value-relevant aspects define the cultural meaning of . . . life . . . and thereby constitute [it] . . . as an object of the cultural sciences"; the interests of the cultural sciences, in turn, derive for Weber "from the general perspective of the development of rationality that he regards as the distinctive feature of the history of Western culture."

Two objections must be raised against this argument. The first concerns Oakes' use of "cultural meaning." In the German original, the term reads *Kulturbedeutung*, that is, "cultural significance." To translate it as "cultural meaning" is quite misleading and even mistaken (Oakes's longish footnote on the subject notwithstanding) and is understandable only as an attempt to read into Weber something akin to a latter-day philosophical distinction between the "subjective" meaning intended by an action's author, and the "social" meaning this action may assume within a group's common culture or life-world (cf. ". . . the actors' experience of their life-world provides no criterion on the basis of which it is possible to constitute a cultural world"). Weber, however, did not share the preoccupations of today's *Verstehen* and life-world-constitution lobby with which Oakes is siding and which has greatly influenced his understanding of Weber. Schutz-Winch-Wittgensteinian perspectives do less to unlock Weber's methodology than to unravel it.

The second objection relates to Oakes's misplaced focus in his discussion of value relevance. Having argued that "the subjective meanings that actors ascribe to phenomena . . . make up an intensively infinite manifold that cannot qualify as a coherent object of scientific knowledge," he declares that "[t]his means that ideal types defined by the scientist's criteria for value relevance are indispensable to the constitution of reality as an object of the cultural sciences." While this conclusion tacitly assumes several steps of argument, it is unobjectionable as long as one remembers that ideal types are not a solution to the problem of value relevance but, on the contrary, presuppose such a solution. Oakes knows this, but loses sight of it. This lapse can be traced back to his peculiar way of posing the methodological problem of the cultural sciences, that is, as the question of the conditions under which a phenomenon qualifies as a cultural fact. In Oakes' hands, this approach to the matter moves the focus away from Weber's concern with the justification of *historical* science (a dislocation which might not have happened had Oakes asked: what qualifies a phenomenon as historical?). The purpose of Weber's methodology of individualizing concept formation is to show that accounts of historical developments are "objective" as long as the described developments are value relevant (or have cultural significance); in other words, as long as they lead up to present-day constellations over whose ordering practical actors are embroiled in conflict due to differing value interpretations. Ideal types are used in accounts of historical developments, but of course they *are not* such accounts. It is not ideal types (a species of *general* concept referring to *characteristic*, i.e., not unique, features), therefore, that overcome the infinite

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manifold of cultural (or better: historical) reality, but individual concepts of historical developments. Accounts of such developments, however, describe the (significant) antecedents of a unique present-day configuration of phenomena. The core of the problem of value relevance, then, concerns the identification of this configuration. Oakes is only diffusely aware of this. His preoccupation with culture and meaning overrides the primacy, in Weber's thought, of history and uniqueness. Consequently, the conversion of subjective meaning into cultural meaning assumes center stage, when what should be there is the conversion of the flow of reality into history.

Both Weber's and Rickert's attempt to demonstrate that there can be "objective" historical knowledge ultimately requires that there be some absolutely valid cultural values. It is through the conflict between practical valuations interpreting such values that a unique constellation of facts moves into the limelight and becomes worth knowing. Therefore, unless some such values are truly valid, it seems there can be no firm foundation for any claim that certain unique configurations are "truly" interesting, i.e., worth knowing, and thus there can be "objective" historical knowledge. Rickert, accordingly, gets involved in a hopeless philosophical effort to show there must be some such values. Oakes, admirably, scouts the uninviting swamps of this philosophy in the hope of retrieving a coherent line of reasoning. His confrontation with a treatment of "value" that generates more inconsistencies than the Hydra sprouted heads leaves him sufficiently disgusted to be reminded of an anecdote about Hermann Goering, who reportedly reached for his gun anytime he heard the word "culture." Nevertheless, Oakes manages to assemble a reasonably systematic argument, which he then proceeds to demolish by unveiling its self-defeating character. Anyone who ever tried to make sense of Rickert's ideas on value must be grateful to Oakes (whose frustrations are obvious).

The premises that generate the problem of objectivity of historical knowledge for Rickert were shared by Weber. It seems that this should have committed him, if he was concerned with tracing this objectivity to its ultimate sources, to the same direction. However, he failed to follow Rickert's lead because, according to Oakes, he "did not grasp the significance of this problem for his own work." An alternative interpretation, of course, would be that he was cautious enough to stay within the bounds of methodology proper, leaving questions of ultimate foundations to the philosophers. Oakes gives no consideration to this possibility, but without further ado adopts the position prevalent in the secondary literature: for Weber, there is an irreconcilable conflict among the various cultural value spheres, an eternal struggle that cannot be resolved scientifically but only by recourse to personal faith. In his work, therefore, a systematic value philosophy is replaced by a sociology of religion in which the empirical manifestations and ramifications of a life under the aegis of warring values are analyzed; and the idea of a rational foundation of value choices is replaced by a subjective decisionism. On this basis, however, it is impossible to justify the objectivity of history.

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Beyond Foundationalism

Oakes' conclusion that neither Rickert nor Weber managed to demonstrate the "objectivity" of the sciences of culture comes as no great revelation. It is also not a satisfying conclusion. Fortunately, the book's significance is not dependent on this somewhat puny result. Oakes's real contribution is to be found in his excellent outline of a set of major ideas, developed by representatives of the Southwest German school of neo-Kantianism, on which both Rickert and Weber drew, and in his presentation of selected aspects of Rickert's value theory. His understanding of Weber's logic of science is less convincing, yet worthy of consideration. The book's least satisfactory aspect, however, is its treatment of the issue to which it is ostensibly devoted: Weber's methodology. Indeed, this treatment is so inadequate as to raise the suspicion that Oakes is not really serious about the matter but simply uses it as a convenient excuse for the discussion of the undigestible metaphysics of a second-rate German philosopher.

"One of the more remarkable lacunae in the literature on Weber and Rickert is the absence of any analysis of the ultimate principles on which Rickert's solution to the problem of the objectivity of concept formation is based: the premises of his value theory." No doubt there is such an absence. However — to use a Rickertian figure of thought — is it a lacuna worth eliminating? Does anything important hinge on our filling this gap in our knowledge? Especially, will our judgment concerning the soundness of Weber's methodology be affected by it? Hardly, it seems; for just as it is a foregone conclusion that Rickert's argument, like all attempts to demonstrate an ultimate source of truth or validity, must turn out to be either circular or dogmatic, so the soundness of Weber's methodology, in the sense of being able to establish the existence of such a source is an entirely moot issue. While fifty years ago it may have made sense to assess the validity of Weber's (or anyone's) logic of science in foundational terms, such an approach has by now turned out to be a barren strategy. We need not and should not accept Weber's or Rickert's own criteria for evaluating the soundness of their considerations. Using different criteria, of course, has far-reaching implications. It is clear both Weber and Rickert organized their thoughts in relation to what *they* considered the important criteria, and that any simplistic imposition of an alien organizing perspective must necessarily render their arguments incoherent (as when a straightforward logic of explanation is read into Weber). To avoid such unpromising distortion, it is necessary to free what appear to be Weber's correct intuitions from the constraints of the philosophy in which they are couched (presuming that such a separation can be achieved). Undoubtedly, an attempt of this sort can succeed only on the basis of an adequate understanding of the rational structure of his methodology and to this end Oakes certainly has contributed. It should be submitted, however, that the real lacuna in the literature on Weber today is the absence of a convincing appraisal of his methodology from an external viewpoint.

Thomas Burger

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Weber, Rationality and the Disintegration of Sociology

Alan Sica, *Weber, Irrationality, and Social Order* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), 305+xiii pp.

In *The Last Intellectuals*, Russell Jacoby discussed how academia has effectively annihilated critical thought, but he did not provide a sufficiently detailed account of precisely how otherwise intelligent and promising scholars self-destruct in the process of "making it" in the University *nomenklatura*.[1] Alan Sica's book is a perfect example of this predicament. Here we have one of the sharper young minds in sociology today embarrassing himself — and his friends — by publishing a patched-up version of a run-of-the-mill dissertation whose contribution to the advancement of knowledge is probably negligible and whose function is, at best, purely careerist in nature (padding a *curriculum vitae* to impress relatively incompetent administrators in charge of promotions and salary increases). To add insult to injury, the book comes irresponsibly pre-legitimated by an impressive list of professional endorsements on the dust jacket, which raise serious questions about the competence or honesty — or both — of some of the discipline's alleged "guiding lights." Robert Bellah, Robert K. Merton, Randall Collins and Stephen Turner, whose short but unambiguous PR statements exhort, for the benefit of potential readers, the virtues of this work, either have not really read or completely misunderstood what they so glowingly endorse. They owe their colleagues either an explanation or an apology.[2]

Although nowhere indicated in the "Acknowledgments" (buried on p. 286 of the appended bibliography), one can readily trace the book's origins in Sica's Ph.D. dissertation bearing roughly the same title and successfully defended over a decade ago. There is nothing wrong with recycling dissertations, especially if sufficiently expanded to the point of amounting to something more than professional certification. However, all that seems to have been added here — as an introduction — is a 90-pages hermeneutical bombast and a tiresome amount of mostly irrelevant or misleading footnote padding.[3] It would

1. Russell Jacoby, *The Last Intellectuals* (New York: Basic Books, 1987). For a critical discussion of this timely work, see "Symposium on Russell Jacoby's *The Last Intellectuals*" in *Telos* 73 (Fall 1987), pp. 167-191.

2. As for the University of California editor in charge of evaluating and approving the publication of this book in *this form*, clearly he ought to be looking for a different job.

3. Over half of the material in the footnotes is irrelevant; occasionally, it is also wrong. Why trot out Heidegger to prove that scholarly works are susceptible to the vicissitudes of cultural fads? In so doing, Sica inadvertently apologizes for Heidegger's political *hubris* as having been only a "brief but confused relation with National Socialism." Victor Farias' study (*Heidegger et le nazisme* [Verdier: Paris, 1987],

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be an interminable waste of time to deal with all possible objections that can be raised against this book. Consequently, the following will be limited to indicating how: 1) notwithstanding the introductory hermeneutics, Sica fumbles in its interpretation of key issues, such as the problem of rationality in Weber; 2) deploys a crude and pedantic methodology, resulting in the occlusion of what is most interesting in Weber; 3) indicts sociology as a discipline, while at the same time indulging in the same scholarly misdemeanors; and 4) despite all the "hell and brimstone" rhetoric, ends up with surprisingly meek and conformist conclusions.

Rationality, Rationalities, and the Demise of Irrationality

It is generally assumed serious scholarly endeavors need not pay too much attention to intellectual fads. This, however, applies only to the presentation of results and not when the research itself is being carried out; otherwise, it entails falling into a variation of the fallacy of *ignoratio elenchi*: the dismissal of "intellectual fads" before examining whether or not such is indeed the case. Post-modernism may or may not be a fad and, at any rate, for a number of reasons too complex to go into here, discussions of its merits and shortcomings have been largely relegated to literary circles and English Departments — intellectual ghettos well outside the rigorous "scientific" confines of sociology. Thus, at least for the time being, *bona fide* sociologists can be exonerated from the seemingly tedious task of wading through the philosophical swamps of "the post-modernism debate." Not so for Sica, however, who claims one of the two main goals of his book is "to open up current opinion regarding what social theory ought to take in before it hauls up the drawbridge on disciplinary limits and scholarly adventure" (p. xiii). This issue is all the more relevant to Sica's concerns, since post-modern criticisms of logocentrism and Western metaphysics go to the very heart of his thesis concerning the limitations of Weber's views on rationality. This failure becomes even more debilitating when the analysis extends to the parallel concept of irrationality.

The book's modest, manifest objective is to spike up Weber's notion of irrationality which, according to Sica, Weber himself "would not build . . . into his formal sociology" (p. 71)[4] because of suspect *personal* reasons presumably

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trans. by Myriam Benarroch and Jean-Baptiste Grasset), as well as the international controversy it gave rise to, have established beyond all reasonable doubt — at least for those who still denied it — that Heidegger's embroilment with Nazism was neither *brief* nor *confused*. (See the "Special Section on Martin Heidegger" in *New German Critique* 45 [Fall 1988], pp. 91-162). However, this seemingly innocuous slip does not merely end up unintentionally exculpating Heidegger; is symptomatic of much bigger problems. Dismissing Heidegger's political "blunder" as an *aberration* implicitly relegitimates an obsolete and conformist monological account of rationality (more on this later). As such, notwithstanding Sica's frequent fulminations against sociology and sociologists, ends up relegitimating precisely what he claims to attack.

4. This reading of Weber is highly questionable. How can it be claimed Weber shied

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extraneous (but not really) to theory as such. Surprisingly, for a monograph of this type, there it no summary or preliminary elaboration of the problem of rationality in Neo-Kantianism in general or Weber in particular.[5] Instead, in an inconclusive and superficial outline of "Rationality and Modern Philosophy" (pp. 5-9), Sica tries to follow Weber's typology of social action by contraposing relatively flat definitions of rationality, irrationality and nonrationality. This simplistic triangulation, however, only confuses the issue, since he claims "Irrationality . . . does not receive much attention [in Weber], and what there is does not qualify as ground-breaking in Weber's thought" (p. 201n.). Pareto's account of irrationality is deployed as a complement so "valuable elements from both men's theories can be remolded into a more useful, more realistic theoretical move" (p. 244). Consequently, when he comes down to analytical brass tacks, Sica forgets the intriguing earlier triangulation. Almost immediately the discussion slips into a crude rationality-irrationality dichotomy derived from an exceptionally bland and misleading quotation rooting the problem squarely in an obsolete 19th century context.[6] He ends up buying into a dogmatic monological account of rationality whereby any deviation from it is thereby relegated to the residual category of irrationality — a taxonomy of which is, of course, provided by Pareto. Yet nowhere does Sica submit anything more than mere *assertion*s that Pareto's theory of irrationality will solve anything. Pareto's position is simply *assumed* as valid without any further

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away from irrationality in his formal sociology when charismatic action and traditional action occupy such central places in his *oeuvre*? Even rational action in *Economy and Society* is characterized as producing irrational consequences. At any rate, for Weber, conceptual rationalization does not necessarily entail the rationalization of action; cultural rationalization often results in substantive irrationality; and rationalization as such usually results in unintended irrational consequences. This is not the place to pursue this line of argument, which would have to slash through the Black Forest of Weber's forthcoming *Gesamtausgabe* and result in a work at least as fat as Sica's. The more interesting, and less bulky, argument developed here is that, even if Weber were guilty as charged, Sica's thesis still would not hold up.

5. This, of course, is not exactly uncharted territory. Discussions of Weber's notion of rationality are a dime a dozen. Yet Sica's account, notwithstanding footnote inflation, does not betray much familiarity with irrationality as a *philosophical* problem; only as a personal pathology or a pet peeve. For the most recent, and probably one of the best accounts of these issues, see Guy Oakes, *Weber and Rickert, Concept Formation in the Cultural Sciences* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1988).

6. Why, of all possible authorities to choose from, Sica decides in favor of H. A. Hodges is a mystery. Hodges' vague and inconclusive quotation (pp.18-19) comes out of a critique of Lukács' *The Destruction of Reason* — a work in which the dichotomy rationality/irrationality is articulated entirely in terms of the Marxist philosophy of history whose eschatology functions as its *principium differentiationis*. While Hodges tries to put some critical distance between himself and Lukács' self-confident account by introjecting a "non-rational" limbo, he nonetheless succumbs to the lure of the dichotomy in order to avoid the Party or the *Führer*. Consequently, his account remains hopelessly embroiled in a pre-Weberian problematic completely oblivious to the tribulations associated with an apodictic grounding of rationality.

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argument.[7] But even if one grants Sica the benefit of the doubt, repeated careful readings of the book still fail to convince that this *paretoization* of Weber can in any way "ameliorate tremendously . . . those few but . . . highly disruptive flaws in Weber's rationalism" (p. 262, 247, etc.).

Since the problem with Weber's rationalism is rooted deeply in his philosophical outlook, this eclectic theoretical *pastiche* ends up as a gossipy *non sequitur* contributing very little to an understanding of either social rationality or the possibility of an objective social science. Besides being reminded by Sica several times that Weber's "personal distress over the nature and place of irrationality in his own life contaminated [his work] in spite of his struggle to maintain purity" (pp. 127ff.), i.e., he was sort of a nut who could not manage to keep his abnormal psychological condition out of his work,[8] *Weber, Irrationality, and Social Order* does not provide much insight into irrationality. The presentation is pedestrian and unenlightening: we are stuck with irrationality as a fact of life; so we ought to build it into our social theories (presumably for the sake of completeness). Two objections immediately surface here: 1) when was it decided, and by whom, that social theory (Weber's or anyone else's) must account for *everything?*; 2) can the "irrational" be granted the kind of ontological status Sica postulates for it other than at an axiological or meta-theoretical level above and beyond social theory as such? (In which case, it would be the arational rather than the irrational, and would exhibit sinister connotations only if reason as *Verstand* is seen as something more than mere mechanical articulation of otherwise uncritically accepted postulates).

One of the main functions of theory in the humanities and the social sciences is precisely to explain the seemingly irrational or unintelligible, thus translating it into the rational and the intelligible. Far from merely providing a duplication of the given at the level of ideas — something which, even if desirable, is *in principle* impossible — social theories are necessarily onesided projects of social reconstruction which mediate between the real and the ideal — not simply by trying to force extraneous "oughts" into a recalcitrant "is," but by the very mode in which they choose to conceptually construct that same given.[9] *Principia Mathematica* demonstrated that systems have to chose between

7. On p. 232, Sica finally confesses, after having overloaded most of the book with irrelevant "hermeneutical" filler that, "for lack of space," he has "not hermeneutically demonstrated . . . that Pareto did create a coherent theory of the nonrational."

8. Elsewhere, Sica writes: "Weber's private war with irrationality at its most horrifying had insured his permanent hostility towards it and towards any theorists who refused either (a) to condemn it as a primitive mental state leading to self-destructive action, or (b) to handle it in such a way that its impact was neutralized. . ." (p. 243).

9. The standard argument against Weber's "value-free sociology" is that the strict separation of facts and values (plus sociologists' awareness of their own value committments) is inadequate to insure objectivity, since the ideal-types deployed to determine what is significant or insignificant are themselves saturated through and through by value considerations which subvert any subsequent claims to neutrality. Worse yet, the "facts" themselves are never simply given, but come preconstituted by value-laden

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coherence or *completeness*, since it is impossible to achieve both. Thus the point of *social* theory as a systematic body of ideas cannot be *completeness* but, at best, *coherence*, since any pretense to the former entails embroiling the resulting construct in Adorno's "identity logic" or Dewey's "naturalistic fallacy." The search for completeness not only generates incoherence, but also irrelevance (*pace* Parsonian "grand theory"). Bottom line: no one should be unduly bothered if Weber did not pay as much attention as one would wish to irrationality or sauerkraut. Rushing in Pareto or garlic is neither necessary nor helpful.

The problem with Sica's account, however, is much more serious than simply a case of trying to scratch where it does not itch. The very conterposing of rationality to irrationality (never mind "nonrationality," which, for Sica, never really plays any significant role) already betrays the more serious flaw of having misunderstood the problem altogether. Consider what happens after it is shown Western rationality is predicated on a set of contingent (or at least not immediately self-validating) values, which function as axioms and whose acceptance is ultimately a matter of choice. In other words: there are other ways of grasping reality in order to live happily, or unhappily, thereafter. For Horkheimer and Adorno, enlightenment reverses into myth; for Husserl, Western teleology turns from a *necessity* into a *project*; for the late Wittgenstein, logic collapses into language-games; and for the deconstructionists, history transubstantiates into a text tracing out *one* of many possible narratives. Whatever one's philosophical predilections, that which does not readily fit in the Enlightenment's rational model can no longer be unceremoniously dumped into the residual category of the irrational but must be recycled instead as part of an *alternative* rationality — a different construction impenetrable to and unassimilable by the previously and dogmatically accepted standard rational model. Post-modernism is predicated precisely on the proposition that the inescapability of the nihilism precipitated by this relativism — something Weber himself struggled against — is the precondition to any future ethical, political, or even theoretical discourse. The immediate implication of this relativization of rationalities is that the irrational loses its immediately obvious character and is elevated to the more respectable status of a competing rationality. In any case, today the category of the irrational as such, as an ineliminable dimension of being, is obsolete — even in instances of emotional dysfunctions within which, no matter how respectfully or embarassedly, Sica classifies Weber.[10] At best, one is left with an axiological decisionism which,

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theories built into our very perceptual apparatus. From the viewpoint of post-1920s philosophy of science, Weber's account is hopelessly naive and obsolete.

10. It is surprising that Sica, who makes an issue of the need to introduce psychoanalysis into sociology (p. 109), glosses over the fact that the main thrust of Freud's work was to provide *rational* explanations for what appeared as otherwise irrational behavior. More radical psychologists, such as Laing and Cooper, have even vindicated the rationality implicit in what in terms of "common sense" is insanity, as a critical standpoint from which to indict "the abnormality of the normal." At any rate, theoretical

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because of its irreducibility, obtains beyond rationality *or* irrationality. The simultaneous demystification and loss of authority of "the" rational also entails the promotion of the irrational out of the Enlightenment ghetto into a perspectivistic democracy of equally valid logics, narratives, language-games, etc. Surprisingly enough, this intoxicating excursus into the dungeons of post-modern philosophy leads willy-nilly to the twilight of modernity and right into Weber's unsolved problem of the objectivity of social science, his "heroic individualism," and his axiological polytheism.

Sociology's Identity Crisis and the Search for Roots

This affinity between the limits of the Weberian problematic and the starting-point of post-modernism is no accident. After a long quantitative detour, during which sociology succeeded beyond its wildest expectations, (but at the price of downgrading its scientific pretenses to mere technological expediency), the problems left unsolved in the early 1920s are merely resurfacing in a post-modern garb. As Sica himself points out on the opening page of the "Preface" to his book, the "Weber industry" is a new phenomenon, whose explanation is impossible purely in terms of the history of ideas. Why is this sort of "Weber Renaissance" taking place today, only to rediscover all the reasons why this same enterprise ran aground some 70 years ago? The fact that the claims of objectivity of Weber's sociology shipwrecked on the rocks of an axiological decisionism is not exactly news. As hard as it is for sociologists to look at social and historical realities, it is nevertheless essential to do so if any sense is to be made of the discipline's latest theoretical vicissitudes. What we are witnessing today is no longer the disenchantment of a world already well disenchanted even before WWI. Rather, we are witnessing the disenchantment of sociology due, not just to the realization of the discipline's growing irrelevance and political undesirability (Popper and Hayek made as good an argument as can be made concerning this matter in the early 1940s), but to the decline of that welfare state which had underwritten sociology as one of its its better financed research branches. Quantitative sociology did not achieve its spectacular successes in the 1940s and 1950s because of any scintillating theoretical achievements or other equally laudable extensions of human knowledge. Even if seen in the most charitable light possible, its contributions have been intellectually janitorial: its success has always been a function of massive government funding provided primarily in exchange for relatively reliable social data absolutely essential for administering an increasingly bureaucratized society. When

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efforts since the Enlightenment have been to explain away the "irrational" rather than merely codifying it *à la* Pareto. Thus, even in the case of Weber's own pathology, the objective is not to ontologize it as an integral part of the real, but to understand it *in its own terms* as an alternate conflicting logic point to a blind spot — possibly having to do with everyday repression — in what was ordinarily accepted as rational behavior in Weber's times.

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the welfare state ran into the rationality crisis of the late 1960s, so did the "social engineering" it supported and financed. Indicted because of the counterproductive results it generated and the bureaucratic domination it presupposed, the status of quantitative sociology has since become increasingly problematic. Compounded with the parallel collapse of the Marxist paradigm, which almost simultaneously presented itself as the radical "qualitative" other, sociology as a discipline developed a serious legitimation crisis.

Discredited as the research arm of the administrative apparatus, and disgraced as the shocktroops of a "brave new" Marxist social order after the world-wide collapse of the statist/socialist model, sociologists have been forced to rethink their identity. Paradigmatically, Sica himself grudgingly acknowledges the pervasiveness of this state of affairs when, in contraposition to Weber's "heroic individualism," he apologetically substitutes a kind of "coping sub-individuality" (p. 263) resigned to its fate, biding time, awaiting the worst. His bemoaning of the alleged "fall of public man" or the equally fictitious "legitimation crisis" (p. 264) is a poorly concealed projection having more to do with sociology as a discipline than with society as such. Today there is public discussion of significant social issues as never before. More information is available to more people and in higher quality than ever before. What has really fallen is sociology as a privileged approach to social reality and sociologists as well-paid experts advising enlightened policy-makers from within the bureaucratic apparatus. The same goes for this so-called "legitimation crisis." Where is such a crisis raging other than in the cerebrum of some confused German philosophers and, more to the point, in sociology as a discipline? Western societies have never been so stable and able to translate potentially devisive political problems into particularistic social or psychological dysfunctions, thus effectively deflecting any challenges to the broader legal and constitutional framework.

Frustrated in their misreadings of social realities and discredited as administrative experts, sociologists can no longer live off the fat of the welfare state, nor chase Marxist collectivist utopias long since effectively perestroikaed out of rational discourse by those very *apparatchiki* who most forcefully defended them. So the brighter ones among them seek to rethink the nature of their disintegrating discipline by going back to its roots in the late 19th century. There, unavoidably, they run into intellectual Zugspitzen like Weber and Simmel who, unfortunately, they often are no longer even able to read.[11] After eventually rediscovering the sociological wheel, they then may finally rejoin their colleagues and the rest of the humanities by confronting those very problems Weber never really solved. The axiological decisionism Weber inherited from Rickert, which forced him into the sociology of religion to study the unfolding of the plurality of otherwise irreconcilable projects, ultimately finds its proper

11. Sica himself readily admits as much (p. 42).

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destination where Croce originally saw Weberian sociology leading after it finally woke up *volens nolens* from its technistic alienation — another branch of history with dubious "scientistic" pretenses. In the age of post-modernism, sociology readily feeds into the multiplicity of more or less interesting narratives and interpretations whose joyous self-confidence need no longer be predicated on claims of leading to anything.

Hermeneutics, Methodology and Mystification

Sica seems to have figured out which way the wind is blowing. Thus it has not escaped him that sociology is increasingly becoming like literature.[12] This is why he wants sociologists to be retrained as literary critics: they should know languages and use these skills to confront the classics. The first third of his book is thus meant to thoroughly intimidate readers by overwhelming them with the brilliance of scholarship around Weber's time as compared with today's abysmal academic ignorance: "No single reader [with the possible exception of Arnaldo Momigliano, whom Sica inexplicably singles out on p. 44n.] knows enough economics, history, legal theory, philosophy, aesthetics, and epistemology, plus foreign languages to pronounce definitely upon Weber's work . . ." (p. 44, but repeated many more times on pp. 49, 77, 96, 198, 256, etc.). How can any mere mortal even come close to someone like Weber, who managed to learn Russian in just 14 days? (p. 92). Clearly, Sica's opinion of his peers is not very high (which may explain why he devotes so much space to coaching his potential readers on how to crack Weber with the help of what, from the viewpoint of most ordinary nuts-and-bolts sociologists, must sound worse than Sanskrit: hermeneutics).

Early on Sica asks himself rhetorically "why an investigation of classical or contemporary theory requires a formalized hermeneutic" (p. 80n.). His implicit answer (more or less) is that sociologists are a pretty ignorant bunch who'd better get their act together and start making sense out of the classical texts if they are to stay in business. Here his obsession with scholarship and excellence reaches new heights. Even "sheer brilliance" will not do: according to the "entire legacy of hermeneutics dating from Aristotle," what is needed is nothing short of "virtuosity" (pp. 87-88).[13] Unfortunately, this follows a list of 20 of the most banal rules (pompously rebaptized "hermeneutical dicta" [p. 82]) that, once decoded into ordinary English, amount to little more than what most mothers tell their children when teaching them how to read "Cinderella" and the like: "figure out what it means." Anything beyond that is either

12. A few years ago he even co-edited a book on hermeneutics. Cf. Alan Sica and Gary Shapiro, eds., *Hermeneutics: Questions and Prospects* (Amherst: University Mass. Press, 1984).

13. The full quote is as follows: "legitimate interpretation of texts demands extraordinary care, even virtuosity, something for which sheer brilliance is no substitute."

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filler,[14] mystification or otherwise highly questionable, e.g., the dichotomizing of natural and "human" sciences on the basis of a contemplative and objectivistic distinction (from the viewpoint of science as *praxis* no such distinction can be made); the "linguisticality" of culture; hermeneutical procedures as "divinatory" in nature; methodological "homology between *interpretandum* and hermeneutic tools"; a totalistic "ontological" relationship; etc. One has to go back a long way to find another instance when so much pseudo-philosophical snake-oil has been successfully marketed as hermeneutical cure-all on the sociological reservation.

This unfortunately unflattering evaluation of Sica's debilitating introduction is subsequently confirmed by the results He achieves by deploying it. The reader is informed of exactly when, for the first time *ever*, Weber mentioned irrationality in his work: p. 61 of the English translation and p. 9 of the German original of the first essay on "Roscher und Knies" (p. 122). This is followed by methodologically dazzling discoveries, such as that in *The Protestant Ethic* Weber makes "significant allusions to *irrationality*" exactly 22 times (all page numbers carefully listed on p. 171n.); elsewhere Weber uses rationality 28 times (every single one meticulously quoted on p. 193); that "by comparison, *irrational* shows up about once every twenty instances of its opposite" (p. 194); that in yet another work Weber refers to "some aspect of irrationality" on no less than 37 different pages — every single one impeccably listed (p. 219); etc. When concretely applied, the previously mentioned 20 "hermeneutical dicta" do not seem to amount to much more than simple arithmetical skills. And when all is said and done, Sica ends up operating with a surprisingly commonsensical and analytically anemic notion of irrationality as that which does not readly fit into the "reasonable."

Worse yet, Sica manages to fumble even when nit-picking. Thus he fulminates against the translator of Weber's *Roscher and Knies* for contributing to making Weber into "another casualty of international scholarship and translation" (p. 29n.) by fabricating fraudulent sub-headings (p. 146) — presumably as part of a broader American sociological conspiracy to subvert Weber's texts and confuse English-speaking students (p. 95). But an examination of the original 1922 edition or any subsequent ones clearly lists the subheadings on the very first page.[15] Already lost in the trees, Sica does not even notice

14. Example (dictum # 2): "The *sine qua non* of credible interpretation is intensive and extensive knowledge of the text . . . and its author so that all key aspects, grammatical (semantic), historical (contextual), and *geistige* (the author's creative psychology and the cultural value of the work), may become known" (p. 82).

15. Sica either does not realize, or must have forgotten, that it was not unusual for German scholarly books — particularly those printed during the first half of the century — to list subheadings immediately under the chapter titles rather than in the body of the text. This is how Weber's *Wissenschaftslehre* was originally printed in the 1922 and in subsequent editions. The 1968 edition differs from the first only in that it *also* includes the sub-headings in the table of contents. It is thus entirely appropriate for the

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the forest. The master hermeneuticist wastes no less than 32 pages agitproping for hermeneutics for allegedly "procuring" never clearly spelled out "unprecedented and illuminating results" (p. 135). When he finally comes around to "put up or shut up," however, all Sica can do is hint darkly at Weber's emotional dysfunction as the cause of the inability to deal with irrationality.

Had Sica actually practiced Hermeneutics 101 and inquired into Weber's own motives for writing the *Roscher and Knies* texts (rather than merely stumbling upon them "without warning" [p. 113] while chronologically and mechanically plowing through Weber's *oeuvre*) he would have realized that the objective was actually to confront Rickert's ideas as developed in *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung*. As Oakes points out in his carefully crafted *Weber and Rickert*, an unpretentious effort in *real* hermeneutics (i.e., serious scholarship), Weber's early methodological writings are solidly grounded in Rickert's work. Far from "constructing his own private epistemology" (p. 150), Weber worked entirely within a well-established neo-Kantian tradition from which he inherited all of its insoluble problems.[16]

Consider one last example of how Sica uses hermeneutics as a smokescreen for sloppy scholarship. According to him, "confronting [Weber's *Wissenschaftslehre*] requires no special knowledge outside of logic" (p. 95). This may explain the irrelevance of Sica's results and why he has trouble solving hermeneutical pseudo-problems largely generated by this kind of approach. Having thus stumbled upon the term *hiatus irrationalis*, he claims to "have searched through sources Weber used, as well as others" (p. 132) to find where it came from, without any success. For reasons not altogether clear, he creates an additional meta-*hiatus irrationalis* between the usage of the concept in Weber and its origins — as if this were really crucial for an hermeneutically-sound understanding of Weber. In any case, Sica here simply leaps over this new *hiatus irrationalis* by indulging in speculative hermeneutics: "Perhaps . . . it is what . . . Rheinstein calls 'a term of art,' one of the phrases Weber introduces for a specific use when none in the conventional lexicon suits him" (p. 133). But if Sica had really bothered to track down the sources of Weber's concepts, he could not have avoided running into Lask, Rickert's student, who introduced the concept of *hiatus irrationalis* in his 1901 doctoral dissertation (now in the first volume of his *Gesammelte Schriften*) and pretty much worked out the very same arguments Weber recycles in the first section of *Roscher and Knies*.[17]

American translator to follow standard American practice and simply insert these subheadings into the body of the text.

16. See Oakes, *op. cit.*, especially pp. 41ff.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 169 note 12. I am grateful to Guy Oakes, who has done much more hermeneutical spade-work through Weber's immense *opus* than I ever will, for sharing his thoughts with me on these matters.

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Sociology is Dead: Long Live Sociology!

Given Sica's contempt for the ignorance, shortsightedness and number-crunching proclivities of his "quantitative" colleagues, one would expect his advocacy of hermeneutics be simultaneously matched by a rejection of their criteria and professional judgment. In the closing pages of his book he indeed rips into the standard shibboleths of "scientific" sociology by reiterating by now well known arguments against the scientistic pretenses of quantitative sociology. Yet throughout his book he sings a rather different tune, presupposing the legitimation of what he ultimately castigates. Thus he claims to want to assimilate Weber's work "into current research" (p. 50); evaluates accounts in terms of their "import for social science" (p. 65); pledges allegiance to the positivist bricklayer theory of "cumulative social knowledge" — where, instead of a bunch of incommensurable post-modern huts, we have a main theoretical edifice (p. 67); appeals to "solid inductive procedures" (p. 131); professes belief in completeness of knowledge and definitiveness of research (p. 139n.); appeals repeatedly to the authority of "contemporary sociology" (pp. 151 and 214); etc.

In other words, this book is no threat to the discipline. Without fully realizing why, it tries to go back to the roots, but does not ask either why they sprouted into the present branches or why fruits known to be rotten for years are finally being discarded wholesale. It assumes, without any demonstration, that an adequate social theory can be produced merely by fertilizing the old Weberian roots with Pareto's theory of irrationality. The unresolved and irresolvable problems besetting the foundations of this mode of theorizing are hardly confronted. Consequently, the book remains mired in the very same antinomies which doomed Weberian sociology in the 1920s and lead to the Parsonification of his ideas. The only step forward possible, after the two steps back already taken, is to dispose once and for all of whatever scientific pretenses sociology still fraudulently advocates, in favor of a more honest, relativized outlook aware of and unafraid to confront its inescapable unilaterality. Sica's parting dream of a new *Economy and Society* able to speak to our present situation (p. 265) awaits a rude postmodern awakening.

Is this book a failure? Only if evaluated from the viewpoint of scholarly standards which, as Sica convincingly argues, have long since been banished from the discipline. As noted in the opening paragraph, the overwhelming majority of sociology books today are not written to advance knowledge or to contribute to whatever serious intellectual debate may still flourish outside academic dungeons. They have to do with careers and certification. In this sense, *Weber, Irrationality, and Social Order* is a success.

Moishe Gonzales

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Reviews:

Reconstituting Enlightened Despotism

Roberto Mangabeira Unger, *Politics: A Work in Constructive Social Theory*; Vol. 1, *Social Theory: Its Situation and Its Task*; Vol. 2, *False Necessity: Social Theory in the Service of Radical Democracy*; Vol. 3, *Plasticity into Power: Comparative-Historical Studies on the Institutional Conditions of Economic and Military Success* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

Over the past fifteen years many of those wandering aimlessly in the intellectual desert of Anglo-American jurisprudence have been guided toward the political mirage of "total criticism" by the Brazilian-American legal scholar, Roberto Mangabeira Unger. Both in person and in his writing Unger reveals a carefully crafted charismatic presence, combining the intellectual power and revivalistic enthusiasm of a latter-day Jonathan Edwards. Once established at Harvard Law School, hub of the academic legal universe, Unger was able to make a decisive intellectual contribution by committing his unconventional blend of radical rhetoric and evangelical passion to the emergence of the Critical Legal Studies movement.

Although he has remained largely aloof from the everyday activities of the CLS movement, Unger has been one of its principal publicists. In providing CLS with its most famous manifesto, he spurned the traditional role of the academic priest standing before the cold altar of the established legal religion. Instead, he embraced the transformative vocation of the political revivalist, hoping to awaken in radical lawyers and ordinary citizens alike a heartfelt longing to translate the redemptive language of evangelical Christianity into the secularized promise of a democratic community of faith, hope and love.[1] With the publication of the first three volumes of *Politics: A Work in Constructive Theory*, Unger's influence appears to be reaching beyond the closed universe of academic legal discourse.

Unger's work does not fit into conventional left-wing categories or classical

1. David Fraser, "Truth and Hierarchy: Will the Circle be Unbroken?" *Buffalo Law Review*, vol. 33 (1984), pp. 745-762. See also the contribution of various CLS members to *Tikkun*.

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socialist traditions. Given the revivalistic tone of Unger's work, together with his extended criticism of Marxist philosophies of history, one would expect the reception of *Politics* on the socialist Left to be less than sympathetic. Yet the true poverty of philosophy for the present-day Left becomes most evident when even Perry Anderson, that stalwart of English Marxism, is moved to celebrate the novel appearance of "a philosophical mind out of the Third World, turning the tables, to become synoptist and seer of the First."[2]

Anderson is clearly less interested in either the juridical or the religious dimension of Unger's thought than in incorporating Unger's programmatic vision of radical democracy into established traditions of cultural Marxism. For example, when Unger declares that his radical scheme of empowered democracy amounts to the fulfillment of the "Christian-romantic image of man," Anderson simply translates this as a more positive and socially-based version of Sartrean existentialism. Ignoring Unger's own position, Anderson easily imputes to him a philosophical anthropology that would make Unger acceptable to a Western Marxist tradition. Although Anderson chides Unger for "a certain overestimate of the independent significance of constitutional arrangements as such," he implicitly acknowledges that the whole point of Unger's program is to transform the very meaning of constitutionalism.[3] Far from being a means of *limiting* the exercise of governmental power, the constitution of Unger's empowered democracy will become a means of *enhancing* the despotic capacity of the state to rule in an enlightened and politically effective manner.

Steeped in a political tradition yet to relinquish the hope for the dictatorship of the proletariat, Anderson has no inherent difficulty with the notion that the state apparatus of an empowered democracy will assume the role of an enlightened despot. He does wonder, though, just how all this will come about, particularly when "the hero of Unger's parable," the radical petty bourgeoisie, is "virtually plucked out of thin air." Just as unsettling to the Marxist political imagination is the absence of an obvious class enemy.[4] What social groupings might be expected to resist the advent of an empowered democracy? The answer is not at all clear, since Unger claims his program of revolutionary reforms should appeal not just to radicals, social democrats and liberals, but to conservatives and centrists as well. But if one takes seriously the evangelical and Christian foundations of Unger's political thought, the problem resolves itself. In Unger's mind, we have all committed the political sin of social idolatry, because we have all, at one time or another, succumbed to the "naturalistic fallacy" of identifying a merely provisional and temporary set of social arrangements with the natural and necessary expression of a fixed and immutable human nature. This makes us all equally open to the experience

2. Perry Anderson, "Roberto Unger and the Politics of Empowerment," *New Left Review* 173, (1989), p. 107.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 96, 102.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 100, 106.

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of political salvation. Emancipation from false necessity is open to all of us, if only we open our hearts and minds to the essential indeterminacy of every established form of social and political life.

According to this view, the only inveterate and unregenerate foes of empowered democracy will be those who persist in a conscious allegiance to the determinate institutional forms of any given social and political order (including, presumably, the constitution of a victorious radical democracy). In particular, all those who believe the institutional life of a republican polity should aim to embed the old capitalist structures of the economy in a guiding and legitimate sense of civil purpose will remain resistant to Unger's program of permanent cultural revolution. Unger's deep-seated hostility to the civic republican tradition is a central, if subterranean, theme of *Politics*, surfacing explicitly only in a few crudely dismissive passages. What may seem more surprising is that America's leading leftist legal scholar also takes for granted that the radical project of empowered democracy cannot be defined in opposition to the socially corrosive dynamic of capitalist rationalization.

The Transformative Vocation of Modernism.

One of the major premises of Unger's latest work is that the concept of capitalism is both too vague and too specific to be of any real relevance to radical social theory. History, Unger declares, does not follow an established script according to which the rise of capitalism out of the ruins of the feudal social order will be followed by its decline and the subsequent emergence of a socialist mode of production. He points out that, if we define capitalism in abstract and general terms as a system of free wage labor combined with the entrepreneurial struggle for private profit, the phenomenon can be found in a wide variety of historical contexts ranging from early modern Europe to the Sung dynasty in China. However, if we make the definition of capitalism more concrete and detailed, we find it refers not to an episode in a closed list of sequential possibilities of socio-historical development but to an historically unique and unrepeatable set of events associated with the North Atlantic countries.[5]

Either way, in Unger's *Politics* capitalism no longer appears as the entrenched antagonist of progressive social change. But then neither does liberalism, socialism, communism or corporatism. Not even Christianity, that ancient bugbear of the radical Enlightenment, is revealed as the enemy of human emancipation. On the contrary, in Unger's hands each of these intellectual traditions and programs has something of value to contribute to the ongoing modernist assault on established forms of social division and hierarchy. In fact, the only particular constitutional doctrine or political program specifically and

5. Robert Mangabeira Unger, *Social Theory: Its Situation and Its Task* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 101-13.

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unreservedly condemned by Unger belongs to the classical republican tradition. Unlike "the great secular doctrines of emancipation," all of which understand that society "is a human artifact rather than the expression of an underlying natural order," the classical republican tradition exalts the idolatrous worship of a canonical form of society. For Unger, the point of a modernist politics is to push "the idea of society as artifact to the hilt."[6]

To that end, Unger wants to develop a social theory that avoids the "shared embarrassments" of both Marxism and positivist social science. Modernist social thought emerged in rebellion against the naturalistic premise which treats the formative contexts of social, political and personal life as if they were beyond our power to change. But that rebellion remained incomplete. Marxism undermined its own insights into the artifactual character of social life by positing the existence of deep structures governing the evolutionary dynamic of history. Positivist social science has devised a number of intellectual stratagems to minimize the importance of the social and political frameworks of human action. Unger agrees that history does not follow a pre-ordained script but, in opposition to positivist social science, insists that people do "accept arrangements and preconceptions that define the terms of their practical and passionate relations to one another."[7] Those stabilized formative contexts serve to contain or interrupt conflict over the fundamental terms of our collective life by endowing a given set of institutional and imaginative arrangements with the appearance of a higher necessity or natural authority. While Unger contends the formative contexts of social and political life represent a kind of "frozen politics,"[8] he also maintains they vary in the degree to which they are entrenched or immunized against transformative conflict.

Some formative contexts are more disentrenched than others. In Unger's terms, they therefore possess greater "negative capability" in the sense that they possess a greater capacity to negate or transform their own underlying institutional and imaginative framework.[9] Unger hopes to rejuvenate the radical project of modernity by unleashing the self-transformative potential already generated through the wholesale incorporation of all sectors of American society into a gigantic interlocking productive enterprise.

Insofar as it was once identified with the institution of free wage labor, private profit, and the transition to an industrial economy, capitalism is probably best understood, *pace* Unger, as an infantile stage in the development of a system of social capital in which the whole of life is organized under the sign of

6. Roberto Mangabeira Unger, *False Necessity: Anti-Necessitarian Social Theory in the Service of Radical Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 586-89.
7. Unger, *Social Theory*, *op. cit.*, p. 151.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 145.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 156-57.

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production.[10] In this context, Unger's eagerness to dismiss the concept of capitalism from the lexicon of critical social theory seems somewhat disingenuous. His obvious and overpowering commitment to "permanent innovation"[11] in the institutional forms of economic life reflects his vibrant evangelical faith in the absolute imperatives of development. For Unger, the expansion of our moral and practical capabilities is bound up with the rise of the Divine Economy.[12] It is for that reason that he rejects the classical ideal of a stable and virtuous republican policy in favor of a new scheme of enlightened despotism designed to promote a revitalized "society of perpetual growth."[13]

If the US still holds itself out as a beacon of hope for all mankind, it is as a transubstantiated evangelical ethos of permanent cultural revolution, rather than the feeble residual traces of republican virtue, which keeps the light burning brightly. Few, if any, American lawyers retain the old republican faith that legal artifice can or should be employed to institutionalize a durable common world of speech and action in which the practice of civic virtues could flourish and develop. Indeed, for modernist lawyers, civic virtue has become a vice paralyzing "the power to innovate."[14] Like Unger, they insist that no set of civic or institutional arrangements should be immunized against the possibility of persistent conflict and fundamental revision. Far from challenging the liberal credo that public virtue has its surest guarantee in the free pursuit of private vices, the program of the Critical Legal Studies movement aims "to extend the scope and clarity of private ambitions by enlarging our sense of the possible forms of association through which they may be realized and redefined."[15]

Unger himself remains pledged to a Christian romantic individualism which portrays the self as "the infinite caught within the finite."[16] To Unger, modernism is essentially a "transformation" or even a "purification" of "the Christian romantic idea of the self." Translated into the secular language of modernism, his Christian faith reveals itself "more readily in an orientation of the self than in a profession of belief."[17] His political theory, too, rests on

10. Cf. Jean Baudrillard, *The Mirror of Production* (St. Louis: Telos Press, 1975).

11. Roberto Mangabeira Unger, *Passion: An Essay on Personality* (New York: Free Press, 1986), p. 13.

12. Cf. Donald Meyer, *The Positive Thinkers: A Study of the American Quest for Health, Wealth and Personal Power from Mary Baker Eddy to Norman Vincent Peale* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966).

13. On the role of enlightened despotism in modern constitutional thought, see Leonard Krieger, *An Essay on the Theory of Enlightened Despotism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975). For a discussion of the "society" of perpetual growth," see Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983).

14. Unger, *False Necessity*, *op. cit.*, p. 587.

15. Unger, *False Necessity*, *op. cit.*, p. 588.

16. Unger, *Social Theory*, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

17. Unger, *Passion*, *op. cit.* p. 17.

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an aesthetic radicalism of self-expression and self-affirmation dictated by an awareness that the advance of modernity has opened up every entrenched formative context of institutional and imaginative life to recombination and experiment.[18] Over and over again he asserts that every entrenched plan of social division and hierarchy can be "cracked open to politics" in a process of individual and collective empowerment. Accordingly, freedom is defined as "emancipation from false necessity." A free society is one which "allows us to become more fully the makers of the social worlds in which we live" by creating "the conditions for the development of productive capabilities and the emancipation of social life from rigid roles and hierarchies."[19]

Modernism, as defined by Unger, is at one with the "social iconoclasm" of the Christian-romantic image of man. Both traditions share the conviction that a person's deepest identity cannot be "defined by his membership in social ranks and divisions." The routinized normative claims arising out of any given set of categories must give way to the need to extend the qualities of love, faith, and hope further into personal expression and social practice.[20] By softening the contrast between context-preserving routine and context-transforming conflict, his scheme of empowered democracy gives worldly expression to the Christian image of the infinite personality struggling to break through every imaginable context of practical or conceptual activity.[21]

Invention as a Way of Life.

Unger's evangelical brand of modernism remains unremittingly hostile to the republican tradition. In his view, the sanctification of a specific version of social life associated with the civil religion of a republican polity transfers "to a limited secular object an ideal of civilization and allegiance that properly belongs only to the human or the divine other and to the principle of personality itself." For man to "accept a limited worldly objective as an adequate goal of his striving" is to lapse into a pagan idolatry of social forms. Unger insists upon the axiomatic "disproportion of the infinite to the finite."[22] By contrast, the classical republican polity aspired to universality only "in the sense that it existed to realize for its citizens all the values which men were capable of realizing in this life," while acknowledging its pagan particularity "in the sense that it was finite and located in space and time."[23] It was through the ritual remembrance of times past, as materialized in the objective culture of the present,

18. Cf., Zygmunt Baumann, "The Left as the Counterculture of Modernity," *Telos* 70 (Winter 1986-1987), p. 86.
19. Unger, *Social Theory*, *op. cit.*, pp. 57, 210-13.
20. Unger, *Passion*, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-27.
21. Unger, *Social Theory*, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-64.
22. Unger, *Passion*, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.
23. J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republic Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 3.

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that the pagan civil religions of the ancient republics endowed the formative contexts of civic and personal identity with stability and coherence. Having made his peace with the remorseless, socially corrosive, developmental logic of capitalist modernity, Unger "no longer needs to prepare the future by pretending to restore the past."[24]

Owing to its temporal and spatial finitude, the republic is founded upon the genetic legitimacy of the stable structures of a common world designed to outlive us all. To survive the decaying effects of time, the spirit of a republican polity must be housed in an objective and durable world of man-made objects standing outside nature to offer "mortals a dwelling place more permanent and more stable than themselves." The human artifice of the common world represents the objective dimension of culture as materialized in buildings, other useful tools, works of art and even codes of law. The constitution of a republican polity makes its own contribution to the fabrication of an objective human culture insofar as it amounts to a reification of "a willed beginning and a definite end."[25] It, too, is the product of *homo faber* infusing the evangelical spirit of an empowered democracy into the structure-revising nature of socialized capital. Unger aims to swallow up the work of *homo faber* in a dynamic process of rationalized collective labor in which the ends of human life are prefigured in the means employed to sustain it. Only by smashing through the formative contexts of the common world can we liberate the full range of productive energies now bottled up in the ossified structures of the contemporary corporate welfare state.

According to Hannah Arendt, the "work" of *homo faber* in fabricating a more or less durable human artifice must be clearly distinguished from "labor," which is a cyclical, recurrent activity aimed at satisfying the necessities of life. Only through the fabrication of an objective culture can men step outside "the sublime indifference of an untouched nature, whose overwhelming elementary force" would otherwise "compel them to swing relentlessly in the circle of their own biological movement." It is the process of labor which governs man's metabolic interaction with nature. Labor and consumption are simply "two stages of the ever-recurring cycle of biological life. These cycles need to be sustained through consumption and the activity which provides the means of consumption is laboring." Arendt contends that the very purposefulness of the world has been shattered by the practical erosion of the distinction between "work" and "labor."[26]

The work of fabricating either a republican constitution or a work of art amounts to the materialization of determinate human purposes. By its very nature, the work of fabrication is in Arendt's view "entirely determined by

24. Unger, *False Necessity*, *op. cit.*, p. 588.
25. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 147-53.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99, 137, 143-47.

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categories of means and ends." It must be "performed under the guidance of a model in accordance with which the object is constructed." Whether that model is beheld by the mind's eye or takes the form of a blueprint "in which the image has already found a tentative materialization through work," it exists "outside the fabricator and precedes the actual work process." Tools and implements of work themselves are designed to produce a specific object. Accordingly, the process of manufacturing was once experienced as "a series of separate steps." Once the activity of manufacturing fell under the control of the modern, multi-divisional business corporation, it became a continuous and automatic process, thereby rendering the very distinction between means and ends meaningless. Under the developing regime of socialized capital, all work becomes labor "because all things [are] understood, not in their worldly, objective quality, but as results of living labor power and functions of the life process."[27] Even the Lycurgan products of a constitutional *homo faber*, designed to materialize the institutional preconditions of the good and just life, must dissolve into a phantasm of endless productivity.[28]

The modern business corporation is distinguished by its capacity to coordinate effectively the various aspects of the labor process. According to Chandler, the modern, multi-unit business enterprise has taken over "the functions of coordinating flows of goods through existing processes of production and distribution, and of allocating funds and personnel for future production and distribution."[29] In order to achieve market control within their respective industries, the expanding business corporations of the late 19th century relied upon a strategy of continuous innovation. Inventiveness no longer was left to emerge as the chance product of individual genius. At first, the work of invention required an isolation from others as "the necessary life condition for every mastership which consists in being alone with the 'idea', the mental image of the thing to be."[30] But once the modern corporation replaced the isolation of *homo faber* with the coordinated team work of university-trained scientists employed in industrial research laboratories, invention was transformed into a business.[31] By pushing the socialization of capital to its limit, Unger aims to make invention into a way of life.

The Disaggregation of Property Rights.

In the realm of legal doctrine, the last impediment to the free reign of social capital is what Unger calls the "consolidated property right." He acknowledges that the existing private rights complex (based on more or less absolute claims

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 143-47, 88-89.
28. Cf. Baudrillard, *op. cit.*
29. Alfred D. Chandler, *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), p. 1.
30. Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 161.
31. David F. Noble, *America By Design: Science, Technology and the Rise of Corporate Capitalism* (New York: Knopf, 1977).

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to divisible portions of social capital) has made possible an historically unprecedented degree of economic decentralization. A system of property rights, which were "unrestricted both in the chain of temporal succession and the scope of permitted usage,"[32] became the imaginative context for the development of market systems of the sort found in modern Western economies. Insofar as it could find shelter within the zone of absolute property rights, the process of economic decision-making would be more or less immunized against the direct threat of governmental interference. Under this regime of private rights, invention became the planned consequence of a process of rationalized collective labor designed to execute the tasks defined by those who act in the name of the consolidated property right. Nevertheless, the unified property right has imposed its own distinctive constraints upon the power to innovate.[33]

By granting property holders unrestricted control over both the temporal succession and the use and disposition of divisible portions of social capital, the existing private rights complex has entrenched a rigid distinction between task-definers and task-executors. This feature of the consolidated property right accounts for the rigidified forms of rational labor found in standardized, mass-production industries. In those established regions of the economy, the need for stability in product, labor and financial markets sets definite limits to the innovative potential of the business enterprise.[34] The use of the patent system to discourage the development of products and processes competitive with existing lines is a notorious symptom of this endemic industrial petrification. To free the development of our practical capabilities, Unger proposes to extend and generalize the disaggregation of the consolidated property right already prefigured in the temporal limitations attached to the modern patent system. Under Unger's reformed regime, divisible portions of the total stock of social capital would be allocated by a variety of semi-independent investment funds to competing teams of workers, technicians and entrepreneurs. The primary capital takers would obtain only a temporary and conditional claim to the funds allocated to their enterprise; "they never acquire permanent individual or group rights to the capital they receive." The object of this reformed regime of social capital is to increase opportunities for experiment and innovation in social life. By helping to break down rigid divisions between those who define and those who execute the tasks of practical life, Unger's rotating capital fund will promote the development of more flexible variants of rational collective labor. Within Unger's empowered democracy "the permanent condition of material progress becomes the plasticity of social life: the relative ease with which people can subject their forms of production and exchange, of machine design and work organization to the logic of problem solving."[35]

32. Unger, *False Necessity*, *op. cit.* p. 511.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 195-207.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 69-71, 159.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 491-92; Unger, *Social Theory*, *op. cit.* p. 210.

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For all its historical achievements, Unger believes the consolidated property right has spawned a rigidified form of rational collective labor by entrenching the disproportionate influence of a limited number of people over the basic flow of investment resources, while removing those decisions from democratic choice or control.[36] With the rise of the modern business corporation, powerful tendencies toward the socialization of capital have hollowed out the traditional logic of property by transforming the rights holder from a natural person (sharing, in common with his peers, the political powers of speech and action) into the mere embodiment of paper values. Unger's radical project pushes the socialization of capital to its limits by trying to abolish the last vestiges of the consolidated property right. In its place he proposes a novel system of market, immunity, destabilization and solidarity rights explicitly intended to weaken "the contrast between state and civil society just as it softens the opposition between devotion to the common good and the pursuit of private interests." A republican program for the constitutional reformation of the American nation-state might involve the reconstitution of the corporation as a civil body politic so as to institutionalize a federal distribution of civic authority within the associational life of an increasingly autonomous and transnational civil society. In contrast, Unger's program requires the despotic intensification of the powers vested in a legally sovereign "decisional centre." The actual enlightenment of that enhanced and concentrated governmental authority would be guaranteed by multiplying "the points of contact between the heights of state power and the general electorate."[37]

Unger's recharged and redeployed scheme of enlightened despotism blurs the boundary between state and civil society through a redesigned micro-corporatist circuitry of social power. By locating the actual genesis of governmental authority in the material interests and private ambitions of a new petty bourgeoisie of managers, technicians and professionals, Unger finally subordinates the 18th century constitutional techniques of limiting power to the absolute imperative of social plasticity. In his empowered democracy the state will penetrate more deeply into the associative life of civil society though its overtly political control over the social capital fund. On the other hand, the increased popular involvement in production and exchange associated with more flexible variants of rationalized labor will help to transform the state into "a more pliant object of collective conflict and controversy."[38]

Unger's radical project shares with other, historically superseded schemes of enlightened despotism the bedrock conviction that continued economic growth and development is the absolute precondition and consequence of individual and collective empowerment. Indeed, one could go further to claim that his work represents the product of an intellectual and political convergence

36. Unger, *False Necessity*, *op. cit.*, p. 482.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 509, 457-61, 551, 437, 449, 209, 546-550.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 437, 449, 209, 546-550, 551.

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between the Marxist perception of "society as an artifact of will," and the "purest Christian ethic."[39] The Marxist ontology of labor revolves around the "idea of man producing himself in his infinite determination, and continually surpassing himself towards his own end." So too, Unger's Christian romantic individualism finds its secular counterpart in the Marxist attempt to generalize "the economic mode of rationality over the entire expanse of human history, as the generic mode of human becoming."[40] Because the disaggregation of consolidated property rights would "reclaim for conscious collective control" the as-yet untapped *productive* power of rationalized labor, Anderson claims such a program must "surely be one of the basic principles of any socialism worth the name." Similarly, despite his obvious distaste for the explicitly Christian underpinnings of Unger's programmatic vision, Anderson remains strongly sympathetic to the Ungerian conviction that the "driving force of history is actually the perpetual positive disposition of human beings to transcend their inherited contexts — development as *depassement*."[41]

As Baudrillard points out, Marxism long ago ceased to be a real alternative to capitalism because it was unable "to conceive of a mode of social wealth other than that founded on labor and production."[42] Similarly, by reconstituting the economy as a "perpetual innovation machine" and the state "as a more effective instrument for the destabilization of entrenched plans of social division and hierarchy," Unger announces his abject surrender to the logic of the given.[43] Once imagination finds its practical expression in a rationalized system of political economy, which identifies the individual with his labor power in the act of achieving "mastery of the secret forces of the universe," even Unger's empowered democracy becomes "structurally incapable of liberating human potential except as productive forces."[44] If there was ever any doubt, Unger's work makes it clear the absolute imperative of development still exercises its monarchical sway over the modern American legal and political imagination.

Citizenship in an Empowered Democracy

For Unger, the special practical relation of reason to the world finds its most appropriate model — not in the forms of symbolic exchange associated with the classical *polis*, but in, of all places, the machine. In Unger's scheme, the "concept of the machine has an affinity to the idea of reason as analysis and abstract synthesis." The machine, he claims, "is reason's call to arms; it is

39. Unger, *Social Theory*, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-98; *False Necessity*, *op. cit.*, pp. 373-77; cf. Baudrillard, *op. cit.*, p. 86.
40. Baudrillard, *op. cit.* p. 88.
41. Anderson, *op. cit.* pp. 104-106, 97.
42. Baudrillard, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
43. Unger, *False Necessity*, pp. 491, 551.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 153; Baudrillard, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

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analysis on horseback." But neither reason nor machine production can come into its own until "they enter into partnership with the practice conception of rationalized collective labor."[45] Significantly, as Arendt has written, "nothing can be mechanized more easily or less artificially than the rhythm of the labor process, which in turn corresponds to the equally automatic repetitive rhythm of the life process and its metabolism with nature."[46] Having embraced "the unbridled romanticism of productivity" characteristic of capitalist modernity, Unger's radical project dissolves the ancient *telos* of civic freedom into the infinite reproduction of growth without purpose. While his empowered democracy is geared to reproduce itself economically and politically, it seems unable, indeed, it is forbidden to reproduce itself symbolically in the form of a shared and durable civic (or even personal) identity.[47]

A genuinely shared civic identity must reflect the existence of a legally autonomous consociation of human beings possessed of the authority to define the purposes of its own existence in a manner consistent with the fundamental norms of the republic. The most durable forms of civic life may count as part of the human artifice and even take on a life of their own. But as "society" came to be conceived as a vast interlocking system of production and reproduction, the highly articulated social structures characteristic of pre-capitalist civic life have been progressively "hollowed out." The rich, associative content of institutional life in the guild, the corporation, and the university has given way to the disembodied organizational logic of the capitalist system of needs.[48] Institutional life is no longer conceived as the product of a creative human and legal artifice immunized against the cult of productivity enshrined in the structure-revising nature of social capital. In the realm of the economy, legal treatise writers had come, by the turn of the 20th century, to reject the theory that the corporation was an "artificial entity" created by the state to house a common power of action vested in its members. Instead, a sustained effort was made to establish that the corporation was a "private," "real," or "natural" entity whose existence was prior to and separate from the state. The "natural entity" theory was carried even further by some writers who emphasized that the corporation also existed independently of the artificial body constituted by the assemblage of shareholders.[49] That shift should not be understood simply as an effort to "legitimate" the emergent corporate

45. Unger, *False Necessity*, *op. cit.*, p. 153.
46. Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 143-147.
47. Cf. Baudrillard, *op. cit.*, pp. 17, 143.
48. Cf. Murray Bookchin, "Beyond Neo-Marxism" *Telos* 37 (Summer 1978), pp. 13-20. Bookchin's otherwise compelling critique of political and economic modernity is flawed by the use of an organic vs. inorganic metaphor which locates the polis in the world of nature rather than within the common world of human artifacts.
49. Morton Horwitz, "Santa Clara Revisited: The Development of Corporate Theory," in Warren Samuels and Arthur S. Miller, *Corporations and Society: Power and Responsibility* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), pp. 48-53.

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system in the face of growing opposition. The "natural entity" theory also represented a realistic recognition that the political identity of the corporate body had been subordinated to the organic life process of "the social." The corporation as a civil body politic was "artificial," not simply because it had been created by the state, but because it was, more broadly, a product of human artifice intended to survive its natural progenitors. To conceive the corporation as a "natural entity," therefore, was to recognize that the organic function of the corporation was not to be found in its capacity to endow "some design of general utility" with the stamp of permanence and autonomy, but rather in its role as a "collective capitalist." Having assumed the form of a collective capitalist, the corporation could be seen as being as much a "natural person" as any individual entrepreneur imbued with the acquisitive instincts of *homo oeconomicus*.

But in the modern corporate welfare state, *homo oeconomicus* confronts a paradox. If he is to maintain or increase his share in the total social wealth, he must acquire an array of sophisticated political skills. In order to survive in a complex regulatory environment, the corporation, too, must become a political actor. This leads Unger to conclude that "it's all politics."[50] Here another paradox emerges. While the politically mediated character of the modern system of needs becomes more important, the opportunities for active participation by citizens in the political processes governing the economic life of the nation are steadily shrinking. Unger's response is to push the development of corporatism to its extreme. Given a rotating fund of social capital, the micro-corporatist intermediation of interests between state agencies and a petty bourgeoisie of professionals, managers and technicians could open up a vast new horizon of social plasticity and practical innovation. Absorbed within the rationalized economic machinery of experimental life, *homo politicus* trades membership in a multiplicity of distinctive civil bodies politic for a disembodied "citizenship of the age."[51]

In Unger's empowered democracy, citizenship signifies nothing more than "the mere circumstance of continuing involvement" in the institutional arrangements defining the temporary and provisional organization of government and the economy. Accordingly, "the importance of a clear-cut dichotomy between citizenship and residency diminishes" to the vanishing point. In other words, it becomes impossible to distinguish between *homo oeconomicus* and *homo politicus* once "decisional processes within grassroots or productive organizations resemble and amplify decision making in the central representative bodies of government."[52] Viewed from a republican perspective, Unger's work presents modern social movements and lawyers alike with a stark choice between his revamped scheme of enlightened despotism and a modernized

50. Unger, *Social Theory*, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-69.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
52. Unger, *False Necessity*, *op. cit.*, p. 529-30.

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scheme of civic action durably rooted in the confederal institutions of a polynomic civil society. Resigned to the consequences of their ancestral failure to erect the civic foundations of a modern republic of virtue, American lawyers have concluded almost unanimously that "republicanism has no strong implications for institutional design."[53] Elsewhere, it may still be possible for a republican *homo faber* to ensure that the civic roles of the *animal laborans* and *homo oeconomicus* remain constitutionally subordinate to, as well as legally distinct from, that played by *homo politicus*.

Andrew Fraser

53. Mark Tushnet, *Red, White and Blue: A Critical Analysis of Constitutional Law* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 17.

German History and Its Discontents

Charles S. Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust and German National Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 227 pp.

Now that the fire from the raging *Historikerstreit* or "Controversy of the Historians" in West Germany has simmered down and the smoke has begun to clear, we can finally estimate the damage done to German historiography (if any) and determine what caused the vitriolic exchange between Habermas and some of the leading German historians. And there is no better inspector to help us examine the flaming words and their aftermath than Charles Maier, whose book, *The Unmasterable Past*, draws out the far-reaching ramifications of the *Streit* by placing it in a socio-historical context marked by a strong conservative endeavor to redefine if not reform German identity. Before discussing the merits of Maier's study, it is important to summarize the major issues that started the controversy and will continue to be debated for some time to come.[1]

1. Four useful anthologies on this topic that contain the major texts and commentaries have been published in the Federal Republic: Rudolph Augstein et al., *Historikerstreit. Die Dokumentation der Kontroverse um die Einzigartigkeit der nationalsozialistischen Judenvernichtung* (Munich: Piper, 1987); Reinhard Kühnl, *Vergangenheit, die nicht vergeht: Die "Historiker-Debatte." Darstellung, Dokumentation, Kritik* (Cologne: Pahl -Rugenstein, 1987); Dan Diner, ed. *Ist der Nationalsozialismus Geschichte? Zu Historisierung und Historikerstreit* (Frankfurt

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The catalyst for the *Historikerstreit* was Habermas who, on July 11, 1986, published "Eine Art Schadensabwicklung" ("A Kind of Settlement of Damages") in the influential weekly *Die Zeit*, directed at the conservative revisionism of three historians (Michael Stürmer, Ernst Nolte, and Andreas Hillgruber). Essentially, he accused all three of seeking to re-create a conventional German national identity by minimizing the devastatingly unique role that National Socialism played in German historical development. Habermas attacked Stürmer for claiming that West Germany has assumed its rightful historical role as the centerpiece of the European defensive arc in the Atlantic system against the Red menace,[2] thereby opening the way for historians to reinterpret the role of the Nazis as defenders against Soviet communism. As Habermas demonstrated, this is also the viewpoint of Andreas Hillgruber's book, *Zweierlei Untergang. Die Zerschlagung des deutschen Reiches und das Ende des europäischen Judentums*,[3] in which the historian adapts the perspective of the "brave" fighting German men and depicts the German military effort in Soviet occupied areas from 1941-44 as a noble effort to hold the front so the German populace would be protected from the terrifying onslaught of Russian soldiers. (No mention is made of the fact that the prolongation of the war meant a prolongation of the concentration camps and the extermination of Jews.) Hillgruber allegedly promotes a conservative ideological "myth" by making German soldiers into victims who fought on the right side of the war against communism. According to Habermas, such rationalization of the Nazi war effort was carried to an even greater extreme by Nolte, who seeks a complete relativization of Nazi atrocities by comparing it to other mass exterminations in the 20th century.[4] Arguing that the concept of Nazi annihilation stemmed from a long tradition of reactions to modernization and that the Nazi exterminations were not so different from others such as those conducted by Stalin and the Pol Pot regime, Nolte maintains the only thing unique about the Nazi program of exterminating Jews and others was the technical procedure of gassing. Since Hitler was fearful of Russian extermination, and since the Jews

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a/M: Fischer, 1987); Himar Hoffmann, ed., *Gegen den Versuch, Vergangenheit zu verbiegen* (Frankfurt a/M: Athenäum, 1987). In addition, there are excellent analyses of the controversy in English by John Torpey, Mary Nolan, Andrei Markovits, Hans-Georg Betz, and Anson Rabinbach, in the "Special Issue on The *Historikerstreit*," *New German Critique* 44 (Spring/Summer, 1988). This issue also contains Habermas' two key essays, "A Kind of Settlement of Damages: (Apologetic Tendencies" and "Concerning the Public Use of History," and the provocative correspondence between Martin Broszat and Saul Friedländer.

2. See Michael Sturmer, "Suche nach der verlorenen Erinnerung," *Das Parlament* 17 (May 24, 1986), p. 1.

3. (Berlin: Corso bei Siedler, 1986).

4. See Ernst Nolte, "Between Myth and Revisionism? The Third Reich in the Perspective of the 1980s," in *Aspects of the Third Reich Reich*, ed. H.W. Koch (London: Macmillan, 1985); pp. 17-38. "Vergangenheit, die nicht vergehen will," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (June 6, 1986).

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had by 1938 ostensibly declared war against the Germans, presumably the Nazis reacted quite "normally" to a threat. Yet it is this very normalization of the Nazi past that Habermas declared dangerous and abhorrent: "The unreserved opening of the Federal Republic to the political culture of the West is the great intellectual achievement of the postwar period, of which my generation in particular could be proud. The result will not be stabilized by a NATO philosophy colored by German nationalism. That opening has been achieved by overcoming precisely the ideology of the center which our revisionists are warming up again with their geopolitical palaver of 'the old central position of the Germans in Europe' (Stürmer) and 'the reconstruction of the destroyed center of Europe' (Hillgruber)."[5]

Habermas' critique of the convervative historians began the most productive and invigorating ideological discussion about the public use of history by major historians and other German intellectuals West Germany has ever witnessed, and Maier is right in maintaining that the debate "has signaled an important moment of German national self-interrogation. . . . The revisionst theses may yet prove to have undermined the taboos of West German civic culture. If it has become acceptable to think the unthinkable (or at least to speak the hitherto unspeakable) about Auschwitz, then other debates will also open. This is not to say that only the right will consider new options. A feeling of being victimized, a yearning for national sovereignty may lead some conservatives in the Federal Republic to weigh a West German nuclear deterrent or their own arrangement with the East. So too, the hope of a neutralized Central Europe may beckon some of the Left once again. The debate over the national past will have served to license a debate over the German future" (2-3). Though Maier is eminently aware of the political implications of the controversy, he is concerned primarily with examining the crucial historical questions with an eye toward exploring ideological underpinnings: Does the Holocaust have a claim to special horror in the annals of 20th century barbarism? In what respect can National Socialism be considered a specimen of a more inclusive political or ideological phenomenon, whether 'fascism' or 'totalitarianism'? What are the methodological implications of assigning National Socialism to one category or the other?

In Chapter One, Maier seeks to explain what factors led to Habermas' essay on the "Settlement of Damages." He begins by recalling the Bitburg incident that reinforced the attitudinal *Wende* of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government with regard to the Nazi past. Bitburg did not unleash the *Historikerstreit*, but the leading actors, namely Reagan and Kohl, in their official capacities as heads of states, did prepare the ground for the controversy by muddling moral categories so that oppressors and victims became united and the notion of collective responsibility for the Holocaust became obfuscated. The uniqueness

5. Habermas, "A Kind of Settlement of Damages," *op. cit.*,p. 39.

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The uniqueness and the magnitude of the Nazi crimes were diminished and, as Maier claims, "by their inability to discriminate reconciliation from revisionism, the participants at Bitburg helped dissolve the inhibitions of historical discourse in Germany" (16). The blurring of moral categories led to a "polarized historical consciousness" and two different modes of interpreting the recent past. On the one hand, social historians such as Hans Mommsen and Martin Broszat sought to avoid relativism by calling for a "normal" periodization of German history with all its contradictory elements and without minimizing the Nazi atrocities; on the other, Nolte went one step further in a plea for "normalization" by arguing that the Nazi regime was part of the history of mankind in general and should be compared to others. Maier discusses their works in detail and shows how other historians had aligned themselves on one side or the other before Habermas entered the fray. In this respect, Maier argues, the debate before Habermas' essay was more about the control of historiography, especially in German universities, for "to control the terms of comparison is to control the parameters of historical — and sometimes political — discourse" (32). By enabling Germany to appear more like a victim of the great powers' partition, Nolte, Hillgruber, and Stürmer were able to lift the burden of "absolute evil" from the German past and reconstruct a usable German identity. Leftist and liberal historians, on the other hand, were thrown on the defensive and ironically found that the Right had appropriated categories Marxists had developed to grasp history from the viewpoint of the common people.

In Chapter Two, "Habermas among the Historians," Maier explains that Habermas was responsible for bringing the largely German academic historiographical debate to public attention. Aside from summing up the key points in Habermas' attack, Maier does an excellent job of linking his critique to the ideas developed in *Theory of Communicative Action* (1981). Since Habermas places great stock in creating a public sphere in which the conditions governing language and communication allow users to obtain knowledge that will enable them to become more autonomous and free, it is not by chance he sought to bring out the apologetic implications of the revisionist theses in a more demonstrative way than the conservative German historians, who were content to elaborate their views largely in professional journals and books. For Habermas "emancipatory knowledge emerges only out of public discussion unconstrained by political pressure or economic power. Habermas' work presupposes that politics must be shaped in conversation, not in isolation" (41). Of course, Habermas did not realize he would unleash what Maier calls an "intellectual civil war."

Not only did Nolte, Hillgruber, and Stürmer reply to Habermas, accusing him of misinterpreting their views and lacking the necessary "scholarly" training to interpret history, historians of different schools and politics such as Immanuel Geiss, Klaus Hildebrand, and Joachim Fest defended the "revisionist

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three" by accusing Habermas of using scare tactics and utopianism. Others such as Eberhard Jäckel, Hagen Schulze, and Christian Meier sought to bring sobriety into the debate by demonstrating mistakes on both sides but insisting on maintaining a moral standard when examining the uniqueness of Nazi crimes. Maier carefully examines their views and the explosive reactions caused by Habermas' second article "Concerning the Public Use of History," which appeared November 6, 1986 in *Die Zeit*, which, Maier believes, raises three sorts of difficulties: "First, he overemphasizes a NATO-nationalist agenda: he implies the existence of a clique of Germans and Americans conspiring to prosecute their alliance and burying the Nazi past to do so. . . . Second, he proposes two different approaches to German identity that seem hard to reconcile. . . . Third, Habermas's ambitious claims for historical rhetoric may raise a difficulty that some of the less partisan participants in this debate have suggested but find hard to prove" (60-61). Nevertheless, Maier argues Habermas was right in pointing out that the "revisionist three" and their supporters had attenuated German responsibility for the Nazi crimes either by diminishing the Nazi initiative in the Final Solution or by diminishing the special aura of the events" (64), and herein lies the value of the controversy, which demands that other questions be dealt with, such as the possible deformation of history due to too much polemic, the issue of comparability, and the nature of German identity.

In Chapter Three, Maier considers the problems of comparative history and seeks to discover why historians and social scientists would want to compare holocausts, and discusses three possible motives: scientific, exculpatory, and proprietary. With regard to the first, he argues that "comparison will enable the historian better to understand the specificity of each such murderous episode" (70). The second motivation is more problematic, since the need for moral unburdening in the search for normalization is difficult to prove, and even when proved it may still be valid. Finally, who has the right "to share in the moral, political, or material compensation that Holocaust victims now claim from the rest of humanity" (71)? Maier spends most of the chapter documenting the "unique" nature of the Nazi crimes he argues is connected to the murder of Jews. "Without the Jews, the *furor teutonicus* might have raged in the conquered regions of Russia, and tens of thousands would still have died in the concentration camps in Germany and Austria. But the great extermination centers in Poland . . . would not have been established" (75). He is particularly insightful in his discussion of the differences between communist terror vis-à-vis Auschwitz, and cites Raymond Aron on this point: "Hostility based on the class struggle has taken on no less extreme or monstrous forms than that based on the incompatibility of races. But if we wish to 'save the concepts' there is a difference between a philosophy whose logic is monstrous and one which can be given a monstrous interpretation" (78). As Maier demonstrates, the principle of German terror was to enforce a ruthless iron law of predictable

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consequences of torture and dehumanization, whereas Soviet terror enforced the arbitrary discipline of nonpredicability. Consequently, the comparison of Nazi crimes and communist crimes is helpful in making clearcut distinctions between two different kinds of periods marked by extermination.

If it is thus valid to make comparisons from a scientific perspective, there may still be exculpatory reasons that must be aired. In reviewing the lively debate about theories of fascism that took place during the 1960s and 70s, Maier points out that the Left appeared to gain the upper hand at first by linking fascism to capitalism, and by asserting (no matter whether leftist theories were tenable) that one could not talk about fascism without first talking about capitalism. However, in recent years, numerous historians, many from the Anglo-American tradition, have argued it was not capitalism but anti-Semitism that made Nazism different from any other kind of fascism, and that Marxist theoreticians were incorrect to have neglected the centrality of Nazi anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. Though this point was well-taken, it ironically served the interests of right-wing intellectuals in Germany, who condemned the Marxists for being anti-Semitic. Yet once Marxist theories of fascism were discredited, the Right historians felt free to drop the centrality or uniqueness of the Holocaust from their analysis of German history and to call for a normalization of German historiography. In other words, whether one's motives may be honorable as in the case of Broszat and Mommsen, who want a more differentiated analysis of everyday life during Nazism, or whether they may be suspect, as in the case of Stürmer, who wants to resurrect the honor of Germans fighting against communism, there is a danger that "normal" historicization will by necessity lead to an apologetic historicism and to the historian's uncritical treatment of the period 1933-45 as just one epoch among others that precludes moral condemnation. Ultimately, we are left with the question as to whether there is something unique or particular about German history.

In Chapter Four, Maier presents a thorough examination of the German *Sonderweg* or separate path Germany took in comparison to other Western nation-states. He reviews the general theory, which maintained (until recently) that Germans had undergone no liberal revolution as had Britain, the American colonies and France, and thus its reaction to modernization was flawed, and this flawed if not backward development also accounts for the German predisposition to authoritarianism. After his lucid review of the *Sonderweg* theory, Maier discusses the challenge to this accepted thesis by two British historians, Geoff Eley and David Blackbourn,[6] who argue that Germany was no less developed than Great Britain and that it had undergone more or less the same economic development as Britain. Such an interpretation led to a shift of chronological focus. The principal terrain for reevaluating the 19th century

6. See *Mythen deutscher Geschichtsschreibung. Die gescheiterte bürgerliche Revolution von 1848* (Frankfurt a/M: Ullstein, !980).

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was no longer the Second Empire of 1871-1918, but the century before unification. By showing how vigorous bourgeois life was and how great the reform efforts were, German conservative historians could claim the former model of German political backwardness was incorrect and that one could identify with a more liberal tradition. Though Maier agrees the *Sonderweg* thesis needed to be revised, he argues that distinctions among nations must be made through analogies, and, citing Paul Kennedy, claims: "Whatever the area selected — controls by the representative over the executive, prerogatives of the monarch, role of the army, management of the economy, freedom of the press, supervision of the educational system — the German opposition was more authoritarian and state-directed" (11). He differs slightly with Kennedy by emphasizing the lack of constitutional provisions sanctioning parties that caused the Left to be unprepared when it finally had the opportunity to exercise power. Maier cites other possible ways of interpreting the peculiarities of German historical development. His object, however, is not to dismiss the peculiarities but to criticize one overall theory that will explain everything. "The larger point is that no single historical paradigm deserves canonical status . . . After Vietnam the once-reassuring idea of an American *Sonderweg* has also lost its credibility. But if such paradigms of national history must reluctantly be left behind, on what historical basis can we ground a sense of national identity" (120)?

Chapter Five, "A Usable Past?" continues this question in regard to national identity, and links the Kohl government's plans for building two museums: the House of History (*Haus der Geschichte*) in Bonn, which would present the four-decade progress of the Federal Republic; and the German Historical Museum (*Deutsches Historisches Museum*) in Berlin, adjacent to the monumental Reichstag building, which would house the memorabilia of the German national territories. Since the planning of the museums had to take the contents of what was to be remembered into consideration, the issues of the Nazi past and German identity were heatedly debated in the Bundestag and in public. Maier records this debate in detail, and demonstrates how it paralleled the controversy of the historians because the central concern revolved around who would be in control of key dimensions of German national identity.

Of course, German history and the writing of German history became more complicated after the creation of two German states. "All citizens of the Bonn republic are in one sense *Vernunftrepublikaner* (republicans by virtue of reason) — and herein lies the difficulty for those seeking a German historical identity. How can history be used to orchestrate an emotionally fulfilling national loyalty if that loyalty must be to a West German state alone? . . . . What role exists for a West German nation-state? Two visions of nationhood have been in most dramatic contention. One is as a member of Habermas's community of liberal democracies; the other is as a trusted constituent of Stürmer's Western Alliance" (145). Maier's own position is a sober one. He

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argues that historians alone cannot play the decisive role in determining national identity: "Any meaningful concept of a national identity must posit a subsisting component, which requires description in terms of nonhistorical variables. We need to know history, therefore, to understand identity; but history will not suffice. If it did, countries would move in worn grooves, and trajectories of development would be predictable. German history, above all, teaches that national behavior has scope for unexpected veerings and craziness, atrocious (and corrective) possibilities beyond what historical knowledge can prepare us for" (151). Maier insists on the validity of the analysis of myth, kinship, market exchanges, language, and art in providing insights into national identity, and he comes up with a notion of structured decisionism as a necessary factor for conceiving national identity. "What is crucial for understanding German values and institutions is a sort of structured 'decisionism,' which is highly rational and desperate at the same time. Desperate, in that decisionism refers to the imposing of political will, the final going beyond rational argument and the careful weighing of alternatives" (156). Only if historians are conscious of the aesthetic and subjective dimension of their work will they be able to offer interpretations of German identity that balance the overdetermination of their theories.

In the Epilogue ("Whose Holocaust? Whose History?"), Maier points out that Germans have revealed a tendency to forget or minimize the Nazi past, and the postwar period can be characterzied more by amnesia than by a conscious working through of the past. On the other hand, there is a dangerous tendency among Jews to make their suffering into the sole measure of their postwar identity and to make it into something no other group or class has ever experienced. To counter both tendencies, Maier argues that "the obligations of memory thus remain asymmetrical. For Jews: to remember that although they seek legitimation of a public sorrow, their suffering was not exclusive. For Germans: to specify that the Holocaust was the Final Solution of the Jewish problem as its architects understood it. The appropriateness of each position depends upon who utters it" (166). In conclusion, Maier comments on the tasks of postmodern historiography, whose thrust he defines as "the unmooring of politics from any unambiguous correspondence with social structure. The distinction (and presumed linkage) between state and civil society fades: both dissolve into an ether of discourse that is endowed with the causal preeminence the Marxists earlier reserved for economy and class alignment. Once language is recognized as problematic and opaque, it becomes an active agent for the postmodern historians." He finds the historians' demand for historicization of the Nazi period is unclear and could lead either to a conservative aestheticizing of politics, or a sophisticated analysis of everyday life and *mentalités* which brings out Nazi politics more distinctly so that the crimes cannot be glossed over. Though Germany lacks the remarkable postmodern thinkers of France, Maier believes the ambiguity of the methodology in West

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West Germany today has led to a new point of departure that is not merely a rerun of earlier ideological clashes: "One can seek to harness a postmodern "historicization' for emancipatory purposes — fusing in effect Habermas's faith in progressive social science with Benjamin's 'flash of memory in a moment of danger'; or one can employ it to conjure up what the French have called the *mode retro*: the aesthetic evocation of earlier repression in the name of historical understanding. The first alternative runs the risk of producing a simplistic and politicized historiography. The second may allow a closer approach to how it actually was justified, if not how it actually happened" (171-72).

Although his description of postmodern historiography is problematic and to a certain degree a minimilization of the dangers inherent in the manner in which history is being deformed in the German public sphere, Maier's book as a whole is a judicious assessment of *all* aspects of the *Historikerstreit*. Moreover, by demonstrating how the acerbic academic controversy is closely tied to the Bonn government's revisionism and the power struggles at the university, the reasons for Habermas' public intervention become more clear, for the future of West German integration into the Atlantic alliance is at stake. Maier appears optimistic about the future of German postmodern historiography because so many traditional paradigms and taboos have been questioned and debated in the public controversy. However, the call for normalization in West Germany in all walks of life appears paradoxically to have created an atmosphere in which an extreme right wing can be comfortably abnormal in public. But this is, of course, related to the meaning of Maier's title: *The Unmasterable Past*. The *Sonderweg* and the Holocaust continue to interject themselves just when the Germans believe they have finally found their "normal" identity. In contrast to normalization, Maier's study points toward a way that this past can be shared and kept alive by Germans and Jews alike, and it is to his credit he does not offer a historiographical solution or closure to the *Historikerstreit*, but rather shows how the controversy can be fruitful for both German and Jewish identity.

Jack Zipes

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Carl Schmitt as Occasio

Klaus Hansen and Hans Lietzmann, eds., *Carl Schmitt und die Liberalismuskritik* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1988).

Since the 1950's, the phrase "Carl Schmitt: *Nein und Ja*" was frequently invoked to depict the general outlines of debate over this enigmatic thinker. His interpreters could be broadly divided into those who considered him a brilliant, though perhaps personally flawed, political and legal theorist, and those who condemned him and his works as insidious or inherently dangerous. But the traditional "*Nein und Ja*" no longer suffices to describe either the tone or the substance of the discussion on Schmitt. In recent years, a significant new dimension has become quite discernible. Instead of being the subject of study and analysis for purposes of either understanding or condemnation, Schmitt and his ideas are increasingly becoming the malleable raw material for advancing the personal, political, or ideological agendas of various writers. Often this occurs without a comprehensive examination of his *oeuvre* or the critical examination of all available documentation, and in disregard of the context from which his ideas and other evidence emerged. In effect, Schmitt, whom some of his critics have described as an "occasionalist," has himself now been transformed into an "*occasio*."

In his critique of "political romanticism" (1919), Schmitt introduced the concept of *occasio* (occasion, opportunity, *Anlass, Gelegenheit*) to explain the peculiar romantic concept of reality.[1] Denying that absolutes or an objective reality existed, romantics developed a subjective approach to the world in which everything becomes simply an *occasio* for romantic productivity. Objects in themselves — history and cosmos, society and humanity, God and spiritual essence, the beloved and the hero — were not what interested the romantic. These merely served as substanceless concrete points around which the romantic game of fantasy was suspended. In utilizing these objects for their subjective purposes, the romantics showed little consideration for factual political, historical, legal, or moral relationships. Almost at will, they interchanged the categories and characteristics they used in treating an object; their affirmation or rejection of an argument rarely depended upon its logic or factual content. What mattered was whether an object or argument suited their aesthetic creation of the moment.

It would, of course, be grossly inaccurate to suggest even implicitly that this new dimension in Schmitt studies *emanates* from romantics. It certainly does not. The representatives of this trend also vary greatly in their outlooks,

1. Carl Schmitt, *Politische Romantik*, 3rd ed. (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1968).

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approaches and conclusions. Nonetheless, the *treatment* of Schmitt as an *occasio* is becoming increasingly evident.

Perhaps this is the result of the ever-broadening international attention paid to Schmitt and the incessant flow of literature generated by this. The international conference of major Schmitt scholars held in 1986 at the Hochschule für Verwaltungswissenschaften in Speyer, and the very fact that *Telos* readers no longer require an introduction to Schmitt, are indications of the increasing breadth of the Schmitt controversy. Now a field of greater diversity, its old clearcut battle lines appear to be disintegrating. The kinds of individuals and groups that previously would never have violated the taboos surrounding Schmitt (e.g., the Left) are actively engaged in this debate — they have discovered a wealth of research possibilities, and are treating Schmitt in a manner that would have been unheard of a few years ago.

That Germany is the natural center of this dispute further increased the likelihood Schmitt would so readily be transformed into an *occasio*. As the recent *Historikerstreit* and Heidegger controversy clearly attest, so many scholarly discussions in West Germany are conducted in a heated polemical atmosphere in which the participants always appear to have one eye on real or imagined, political and ideological opponents. Schmitt studies is even beginning to create its own parlance; writers almost feel obligated to identify themselves or their opponents as "Right-Schmittians," "Left-Schmittians," or "anti-Schmittians."

Most of these trends and factors are reflected in *Carl Schmitt und die Liberalismuskritik*, a collection of papers presented at a 1987 symposium hosted by the Theodor Heuss Academy. Among the participants, only Rüdiger Altmann and Günter Maschke have been seriously involved with this subject for some time, though both Martin Gralher and Theo Schiller have worked more indirectly with the subject. Although the authors of the major studies of Schmitt were absent, this was still a rather interesting forum for the discussion of such an important theme as Schmitt and liberalism. As Maschke describes it, he was "invited by liberals, to speak as an anti-liberal before liberals about an anti-liberal." Some of the papers make real contributions to our understanding or raise stimulating questions for debate and research. But others either treat Schmitt as an *occasio* or are unoriginal.

The introduction by the editor, Klaus Hansen of the Theodor Heuss Academy, suffers from several of the flaws that generally mar this volume. His attempt at an overview of Schmitt's anti-liberal characteristics eschews, for the most part, both Schmitt's own corpus and the major studies of him. Hansen relies almost exclusively upon what certain symposium participants asserted or upon the works of a series of traditional intellectual or political opponents of Schmitt, ranging from Hermann Heller and Herbert Marcuse in the 1920's and 1930's to more recent critics such as Jürgen Fijalkowski, Jürgen Habermas, or Dolf Sternberger. Not surprisingly, Hansen reiterates old epithets — supposedly Schmitt was fixated on the extreme case, and his concept of democracy was that of the ceremonious strong state founded upon the

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public acclamation of a socially homogeneous people. Thus the introduction, like part of the short biographical sketch that follows, is quite misleading.

Where Hansen rises above traditional critics is in his willingness to confront Schmitt intellectually. It is indeed refreshing to find a critic such as Hansen acknowledging that Schmitt has been falsely labelled an irrational thinker. Hansen should be particularly commended for recognizing the importance of the current discussion of Schmitt. This is quite a contrast to those who seek only to disparage or dismiss Schmitt out of hand, as exemplified by Kurt Sontheimer's postulate, "Whoever embraces liberaldemocracy has no need of Carl Schmitt." Hansen notes that after WWII Schmitt had been turned into an "object that symbolized the past to be overcome," one worthy only of condemnation, not discussion; "to distance oneself from Schmitt was to distance oneself from National Socialism." The recent end to this intellectual "quarantine," denoted by the fact Schmitt is again at least *diskussionswürdig*, has in Hansen's view a broader meaning for Germans. "This development of the debate on Carl Schmitt in West Germany," he states, "signifies an advancement for our intellectual culture."

Several of these points are echoed by Rüdiger Altmann, a political publicist quite familiar with Schmitt personally as well as intellectually, and by Manfred Lauermann, a relative newcomer to this arena. Altmann, who for decades has argued for a more open airing of this subject, provides an accurate and balanced sketch of the works that established Schmitt's reputation as a major 20th century political and legal thinker. The "year 1933," of course, cannot be evaded, and Altmann emphasizes there can be no exculpation for Schmitt's collaboration with the Third Reich. But Altmann also contends that Schmitt's major intellectual achievements, primarily those of Weimar, must not be judged solely from the perspective of the subsequent Nazi period. He speculates how differently Schmitt and his earlier works might have been evaluated had the Nazis forced him to emigrate, where with his reputation untainted he might have found an audience in the English-speaking world, possibly influencing its political and legal theory.

The emotionally charged nature of this subject, arising more than anything else from Schmitt's *volte face* in 1933, comes through more directly in Lauermann's piece, devoted exclusively to Schmitt and National Socialism. Labelling himself a "Left-Schmittian," Lauermann expresses (as he puts it) the almost unavoidable rage and bitter aftertaste felt by liberal and leftist scholars when they study a figure who collaborated with a regime responsible for such enormous oppression and human destruction. Nonetheless, he believes these natural feelings should not deter an understanding based on hard data and detached analyses. The necessity of examining this problem in its proper historical context, he points out, was already evident in Hannah Arendt's evaluation of intellectuals such as Schmitt: "In all fairness to those among the elite, on the other hand, who at one time or another have let themselves be seduced by totalitarian movements, and who sometimes, because of their intellectual abilities, are even

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accused of having inspired totalitarianism, it must be stated that what these desperate men of the twentieth century did or did not do had no influence on totalitarianism whatever, although it did play some part in earlier, successful, attempts of these movements to force the outside world to take their doctrines seriously. Wherever totalitarian movements seized power, this whole group of sympathizers was shaken off even before the regimes proceeded toward their greatest crimes."[2] But aside from identifying the need for a systematic examination of Schmitt's engagement with National Socialism that goes beyond a mere biographically-oriented analysis,[3] Lauermann offers nothing new. He presents only a choppy, incomplete outline of a research proposal, consisting of long bibliographical lists interspersed with commentaries on questions that need addressing in the various phases of this kind of study. Though his approach might eventually prove fruitful, one could question publication at such a primitive stage of research.

The contributions of Martin Gralher, Bernard Tucker, Theo Schiller, and Günter Maschke focus the debate more precisely on Schmitt's relation to liberalism. However, given the dissimilar attitudes and approaches of these scholars, their conclusions quite naturally differ dramatically.

Gralher, a political science professor at Bochum University, presents a provocative but polemical and unoriginal explanation of "Why Carl Schmitt could not be a liberal." He reveals his own predilection in the highlighted quote from René König that prefaces his analysis: "Carl Schmitt is probably the most unprincipled and most intellectually dishonest representative of the intellectually directionless bourgeoisie of the 1920s." Gralher appears less concerned with Schmitt's critique of liberalism than with his very thought and method. Allegedly opposed to "compromise" and the "wisdom of the middle" (König) cherished by liberals, Schmitt always "thinks in extremes," as did "Hobbes and Machiavelli." Moreover, Schmitt's method of analysis is substanceless, drawing its framework and logic from the existential situation and the pulse of the time; it is a manifestation of nihilism traceable to a distorted version of Vaihinger's philosophy of "*Als-Ob*" and Nietzsche.

In recycling these very, *very* old charges, Gralher ignores the abundant scholarship over the past 20 years that has refuted them. Instead, he prefers Fijalkowski (1958), Löwith (1935), and even the 1933 protest of Catholic Center Party leader Ludwig Kaas against Schmitt's "constitutional relativism." Gralher fails to mention that what Kaas attacked was actually Schmitt's support for Chancellor Schleicher's emergency plan, one of the main objectives of which was the prevention of a Nazi seizure of power; nor that Kaas offered no similar protest to Hitler's subsequent legal appointment as chancellor,

2. See Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Meridan Books, 1964), p. 339.

3. For the most recent attempt at this kind of study, see Bernd Rüthers, *Entartetes Recht: Rechtslehren und Kronjuristen im Dritten Reich* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1988).

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and that Kaas' party (no doubt with its principle of constitutional absolutism still intact) cast its ballots for the Enabling Act in March 1933 granting Hitler dictatorial powers, whereas Schmitt had warned against just such a legal usurpation of power.

One can also detect in Gralher a sense of sincere disquiet, shared by many others, about a resurgence of Schmittian thought in West Germany today.[4] Such intrinsically menacing ideas must be unmasked for what they truly represent and be subdued before their insidious influence once again poisons the political culture. This partially explains Gralher's challenge to recent attempts by the Bochum philosopher Bernard Willms, Günter Maschke, and others to place Schmitt in the pantheon of classical European thinkers. After arguing strenuously against any link between Schmitt's political philosophy and that of Aristotle, Gralher encounters more difficulty dissociating Max Weber from the taint of any Schmittian relationship, especially since Wolfgang Mommsen, G. L. Ulmen, and others have made the affinities between Schmitt and Weber so undeniable. To Grahler, however, the fundamental distinction is that Weber's "antinomian thought" never led to his direct assault on liberalism. Quite simply, whereas Weber sought a "maximum of real freedom," Schmitt did not.

Gralher's calcified opinions and preferences for only certain kinds of sources creates the impression that a discussion about Schmitt is not going to progress very far beyond old ground. This is reminiscent of what Sigmund Neumann (paraphrasing Schmitt) observed about the detrimental effects the Weimar Reichstag party "debates" had on the liberal ideals of compromise and persuasion: "Discussion becomes meaningless where one's partner has already decided on his position before the discussion has begun . . . . As a result the intellectual foundations of liberalism and parliamentarism have been shaken."[5] Apparently, in some circles the Schmitt discussion has been closed for a long time, with little likelihood of it opening again soon.

How very different is the tone of the philosophical piece that follows Gralher's, where Bernard Tucker suggests that much can be learned about "the limits of the Enlightenment and liberalism" from Schmitt's concept of the *Ausnahmezustand* (exceptional case). In his "impressionistic walk" through Schmitt's texts, Tucker never hesitates to place Schmitt among major intellectuals of the rank of Sartre, Foucault, Kafka, and Beckett, or to suggest the continuing relevance of his penetrating thought and incisive analyses to contemporary political and cultural problems in the modern Western world, as well as how these might also "enhance our understanding of Third World problems." To Tucker, Schmitt is "no gravedigger of democracy" or "mentor of counter-revolution," but rather "a shatterer (*Zertrümmerer*) of illusions" who teaches us "to evaluate things from the outside, in order to grasp better their inner essence."

4. *Ibid.*

5. Sigmund Neumann, *Die deutschen Parteien: Wesen und Wandel nach dem Kriege* (Berlin: Jünker und Dünnhaupt Verlag, 1932), p. 111.

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Most of Tucker's points definitely suffer from a lack of elaboration and certainly could benefit greatly from critical responses and commentaries; such musing can also often lead to untenable conclusions or boundless subjectivity. Still, he is thought-provoking and does not appear to contradict what is in Schmitt's writings. Perhaps, through his Schmittian excursion on the periphery of the Enlightenment and liberalism, Tucker has actually broadened the confines of the current debate.

That liberal thinkers can not only find Schmitt intellectually stimulating but also have the capability of internalizing many of his essential critiques and ideas is evidenced further by Theo Schiller's work on Rolf Schroers. Twice a Bundestag candidate and director of the Theodor Heuss Academy until his death in 1981, Schroers achieved an intellectual renown that makes his relation to Schmitt all the more significant. One of the most important German authors of the 1950's and a forerunner of the social liberalism of the late 1960's, Schroers, together with Ralf Dahrendorf, became a symbol of German liberalism. He stands as a personal refutation to those who persist in claiming Schmitt has nothing to offer liberal-democratic thinkers and only the radical Right and Left would find him useful or even appealing. From a historical perspective, it is also noteworthy that those pro-republican intellectuals (e.g., Moritz J. Bonn, Ernst Fraenkel, Sigmund Neumann, Karl Mannheim, Waldemar Gurian, *et al.*), who incorporated so many of Schmitt's ideas into their own work, contradict the narrow interpretation that his influence was restricted to the anti-Weimar extreme Right. But when Schroers established his relation to Schmitt in the 1950's, he, too, had to struggle with such misconceptions in a highly unreceptive atmosphere, where the prevailing intolerance inhibited any attempt to deal with the ideas of this politically tainted outcast on the high intellectual level Schroers was convinced they merited.

Schiller, a liberal who does not necessarily share this fascination with Schmitt, admits that Schroers' frequent use of Schmitt's concepts and statements proved an irritant to his acquaintances. "It has become clear," Schiller states, "that Schroers absorbed all the central concepts of Carl Schmitt's political theory." Both thinkers were particularly bound by their mistrust of "sleek models of a harmoniously functioning" society and by their attempt to penetrate "hard realities." But, Schiller argues, the "crucial difference" was Schroers' transference of these Schmittian ideas "to the level of individual existence," thereby also fundamentally altering the meaning they conveyed. The decisionist Schmittian sovereign, for example, was transformed into the individual citizen who decides. What was paramount for Schroers is the freedom of the individual, who will make existential decisions and bear the responsibility for them. Schiller concedes that ultimately Schroers failed to hurdle the notorious liberal problem that in itself the freedom of the individual contains no inherent principle for a social order. However, Schiller follows this with the very cogent remark that Schmitt, despite his incisive analyses and sharp, often caustic, assaults on the deficiencies of liberalism, likewise never provided

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provided the principles for a new political structure through his decisionist ideas or otherwise. Although this latter point is often overlooked, Schiller goes further in arguing the less tenable thesis that Schmitt's decisionism, with its "collectivist point of reference," has out of necessity led to authoritarian consequences.

In many respects, Schiller handles Schroers as Gralher does Weber. After discussing the relation and obvious parallels in thought between Schmitt and Schroers, he concludes by emphasizing an intrinsic dichotomy between these thinkers with respect to freedom vs. authoritarianism. Schiller's interpretation of Schroers' ideas might very well be correct, but in articulating these he leaves the misconception that Schmitt inherently stands against freedom and that his ideas, by principle and consequence, are authoritarian. Moreover, it remains completely unclear whether Schroers himself concurred in this interpretation of Schmitt.

How much significant research, thought, and discussion the multifaceted relation of Schmitt to liberalism still requires is manifested in the pregnant questions Maschke posed before returning to his primary theme of Schmitt's anti-liberal motives. Schmitt's juridical decisionism as a critique of the bourgeois *Rechtsstaat* needs further examination, as does the sharp distinction he draws between liberalism and democracy. The latter, already significant for Marx, is acquiring increasing importance because the Left currently relies on this distinction to show the alleged anti-democratic character of parliamentary government. Meanwhile, other leftist writers, especially in reviews and articles in *Kritische Justiz* over the past several years, have charged that Schmitt's anti-liberalism was a secondary concern, that liberalism was merely something that had to be swept aside in order to clear an open field for a direct assault against his real targets — socialism and the revolutionary proletariat. A related leftist contention is that perhaps Schmitt himself was a liberal on essential points, who, despite his critique of the political aspects of liberalism (discussion, parliamentarism, political parties, etc.), did, in a broader sense of economic and class interests, as well as culture, reflect and defend liberal bourgeois society. Even Schmitt's concepts of the *Ausnahmezustand* and "commissarial dictatorship" are viewed not as anti-liberal but rather as the "*ultima ratio* for preserving a liberal system at whose center always stands the security of bourgeois property." Although this last point is the basis of Lietzmann's paper (implicit also in Haselbach's), it is quite unfortunate more of the aforementioned questions were not thoroughly or systematically confronted in a symposium with its specific concentration on the critique of liberalism.

For Maschke, Schmitt's anti-liberalism stems from his Catholic heritage, Weimar's real domestic crises, and most of all from the burdens of Versailles and the League of Nations. While these points are not really new, Maschke provides a clearer, more informed as well as informative discussion of each than found in most works. Particularly noteworthy is his emphasis on the actual historical context of the year 1923 as it affected Schmitt's attitude toward

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liberalism. Economic collapse and the Great Inflation, the Hitler *Putsch* and Communist revolts, a Rhenish separatist movement and the Ruhr occupation — all had brought Germany to the edge of civil war and national disintegration. But according to Maschke, the "self-laceration" of the *Parteienstaat* had another disastrous impact beyond ensuring the failure of liberalism in Weimar domestic politics; it demonstrated that liberal principles themselves were incapable of furnishing the unity necessary for Germany to defend itself against its foreign enemies and oppressors. Indeed, the system of Versailles and Geneva actually constituted a kind of "liberal economic-ethical imperialism" which, under the guise of universal humanitarian principles, allowed the victorious powers to control other countries and intervene around the world in their own national political and economic interests. Thus Germany found itself not only suppressed by its enemies, but condemned as an "enemy of humanity."[6] Here Maschke makes a real contribution by channeling at least part of the discussion in the direction of the too-often neglected area of Schmitt's ideas on international law and politics as they relate to his general political and legal theory.

In departing down this very promising avenue of investigation, Maschke also tends to reveal the existence of an underlying, more consequential, purpose in his scholarly interest in Schmitt, liberalism, or Weimar. An intensity and pervasive tone of personal engagement in his discussion of Weimar Germany oppressed by a hypocritical liberalism of the victors are signs of conservative nationalist sentiments with contemporary relevance. Although Maschke ranks among the more intelligent writers in this field, it appears he too has discovered in Schmitt a powerful vehicle, an *occasio*, for advancing a particular political and ideological perspective on Germany's current situation and problems. At points, this becomes quite explicit, as when he relates Schmitt's ideas on foreign policy ". . . to West Germany and its involvement in economic and military alliances," or when, no doubt to the shuddering of most Germans, he challenges the comforting adage "*Bonn ist nicht Weimar.*" Suggesting this distinction is repeatedly made in order to "ignore the new Geneva and the new Versailles," Maschke concludes: "Bonn is therefore Weimar, and a prison remains a prison, even when it becomes more comfortable to stay within it than to break out." What he proposes about the problems of German sovereignty and interdependence awaits elaboration. But, apparently, it will be through Schmitt that Maschke will lift the veil of illusion from the eyes of West Germans.

A more extreme use of Schmitt as an *occasio* can be found in Sombart's interpretation, which exihibits the very type of "boundlessness" Schmitt severely criticized as a major manifestation of romantic occasionalist thought. In a very

6. For elaboration and deeper understanding of this Schmittian theme, see G. L. Ulmen, "American Imperialism and International Law: Carl Schmitt on the US in World Affairs," *Telos*, No. 72 (Summer 1987), especially pp. 62-65.

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short, excessively redundant, paper, Sombart essentially reiterates a grandiose theme he has promoted for years in various fora, but has yet to develop, let alone substantiate through a methodological discussion, a theoretical framework, or an analysis of the extensive documentation now available.

For Sombart, the key to Schmitt is neither Weimar nor the Third Reich; it is the Wilhelmine Empire. As the heir to "Bismarck, Roon and Moltke," Schmitt is supposedly the very embodiment of the "reality" and "misfortune of German history" — "the symptom of a sickness." Schmitt is an illustrious representative of the "collective unconscious of the Germans" that can only be thoroughly or properly understood through psychoanalysis. In this paper, Sombart never reveals precisely the nature of this psychic problem, except to emphasize it concerns German "men." However, in his autobiographical *Jugend in Berlin* (the sole source for any of these assertions) Sombart identified the roots of the German catastrophe in the state fetish and power fantasies of patriarchal masculine-dominated Wilhelmine society.[7] Considering the present serious difficulties plaguing psychohistory as a methodology, together with Sombart's persistent failure to produce anything of substance on the subject, this approach holds little promise.[8] However, as a stark contrast with Maschke's perspective it again clearly demonstrates the malleability of Schmitt and what he might signify in a broader historical context. To Maschke, Schmitt directs one's view outward toward enemies, indicating the need for a unified political will and strength for national sovereignty, whereas for Sombart Germans must turn inward to their psyche so as to become conscious that such power considerations represent the very core of Germany's historical problem the study of Schmitt can greatly illuminate.

The contributions of Hans Lietzmann and Dieter Haselbach similarly demonstrate that Schmitt can be just as tractable in the hands of the Left. Lietzmann also unintentionally exemplifies a more universal tendency among writers who attempt to deal with this subject — the negative predisposition toward any Schmittian idea. Too often it is presupposed that a meritorious concept, especially one supportive of a democratic constitutional system, must almost

7. See Nicolaus Sombart, *Jugend in Berlin* (Munich: Hanser Verlag, 1984), especially pp. 257-278.

8. Sombart's most recent effort to invoke the Oedipus complex to explain Schmitt's character, ideas, and politics, including his compromises with Nazism, is also entirely unconvincing. Sombart derives all of his conclusions from a peculiar reading of a *single* book by Schmitt (*Hamlet oder Hekuba: Der Einbruch der Zeit in das Spiel*, 1956). Neglecting all other evidence and more plausible theses, he delves beneath the actual text of this book to uncover all sorts of unconscious, sexually based motivations that have escaped the attention of other scholars (Schmitt's fear of chaos and the Hobbesian state-of-nature, Sombart proclaims, "is, as we know, repressed sexuality"; Schmitt's basic problem "is definitely his profound mother bond.") Though clothed in erudition and scientific pretense, this kind of "scholarship" presumes powers of divination that would dazzle the Oracle at Delphi. See Nicolaus Sombart, "Carl Schmitts Hamlet," *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, vol. 29 (September 1988), pp. 474-486.

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by definition be unrelated to Schmitt, while one can readily detect Schmitt's insidious influence in ideas deserving condemnation. A perfect case in point is the West German constitutional system. In an effort to show that certain of Schmitt's fundamental political and legal arguments were not directed at undermining the Weimar constitution, I noted that several of these same ideas were incorporated into the Bonn constitution as one attempt to rectify the weaknesses of Weimar and to ensure the stability of the newly created postwar democratic order.[9] In response, a critic dismissed this comparison out of hand, chastizing the very notion of any Schmittian influence on a democratic system of which this critic quite understandably approved.[10] However, since Lietzmann believes certain of these constitutional structures, above all the Federal Constitutional Court, were intended to prevent a true democratic order from emerging in the postwar era, he argues that (in important ways) Schmitt really was "the father of the fathers of the constitution" of West Germany.

Lietzmann views Schmitt's theories and proposals as paradigms for more general continuities in Germany from Weimar to the Federal Republic. In his leftist framework, Schmitt appears as a thinker determined to secure the hegemony of bourgeois social and economic interests when, after the 1918 German revolution, "bourgeois political domination" through parliament was challenged by pluralistic forces, particularly those emanating from the Left. Through various political conditions, Schmitt relentlessly, often opportunistically, pursued the immutable goal of establishing extra-legislative ideals and political forces that could counteract the anti-bourgeois pluralistic currents within the parliamentary system. In Weimar, his effective surrogates for lost bourgeois political domination in parliament were the concept of the state of exception and the emergency powers of the Reich president, whom Schmitt had elevated to the status of an esteemed ideal by proclaiming him "defender of the constitution" against the self-interested pluralistic parties of the Reichstag. After WWII, when political circumstances and party strategies in West Germany prevented the institution of the presidency from being revived as a mechanism for securing bourgeois domination against the democratic forces of a parliamentary system, the new Federal Constitutional Court was substituted to fulfill this purpose.

Lietzmann is correct in stating the Constitutional Court was intended to place limits on the absolute exercise of democratic freedom and power through parliament or other political and constitutional means. He also establishes that such thinking was distinctly in the Schmittian tradition of political and legal philosophy. However, his peculiar interpretation of the primary goal of the Constitutional Court deviates substantially from that of most informed observers of German history and contemporary society, who do

9. See Joseph W. Bendersky, *Carl Schmitt: Theorist for the Reich* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 283-285.

10. See the review by Stephen Holmes in *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 77 (1983), pp. 1066-1067.

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not see the Constitutional Court as an institution of bourgeois domination designed to contain pluralistic forces and the Left, but as evidencing that the Germans have learned from the Weimar and Nazi experiences. One of the essential purposes of the Constitutional Court, like those specific constitutional provisions limiting extremist manipulation of legal rights and freedoms, is to prevent anti-democratic forces from again exploiting democratic procedures and power to destabilize, paralyze, or overtly undermine the constitutional order in the future. Whereas most observers view the security and stability provided by this court as a laudable achievement benefiting West German society in general, Lietzmann implies this institution is a hindrance to true democracy, one that functions only in the interest of certain segments of society.

Lietzmann's argument that Schmitt's fundamental and immutable objective was the preservation of the domination of the bourgeois social and economic order is equally dubious. It is not based on a comprehensive analysis of the ideas and attitudes on society or economics expressed by Schmitt in his works or private papers, which would certainly be a very valuable scholarly contribution. We receive instead one quote from Schmitt's Weimar book on the president as the "defender of the constitution": "To defend and protect the principles of the bourgeois social and economic order as a higher order and true constitution against the legislator." Thereafter, as Lietzmann attempts to develop his thesis, this quote (with the added preface: "in Schmitt's words") is repeatedly used, as if its first citation had firmly established it and Lietzmann's inferences as incontrovertible facts. The reader receives the distinct, though erroneous, impression Schmitt is articulating his own ideas and goals. In actuality, this is only a partial quote. The complete citation (see below) and its textual context do not even imply what Lietzmann infers.[11] In this statement, Schmitt was referring exclusively to the US Supreme Court's decisions relative to fundamental rights and due process of law, which in subsequent passages he then contrasted with the much more limited role of the Weimar courts. Schmitt did not express agreement with US Supreme Court practices, but discussed these to counterbalance the tendency of certain German jurists to transform the American court into a "kind of myth" of the ultimate defender of rights, freedom, justice, and the constitution. If any societal attitude was revealed in this general discussion, it was probably in the preceding passage, where Schmitt reminded these jurists that the US Supreme Court ". . . by treating them as unconstitutional, had for years hindered and prevented labor protection laws and social-political regulations, even those concerning women and child labor, which to us in

11. The complete quote reads: "In practice the American Supreme Court, on the grounds of the 5th and 14th amendments and with the development of the often-discussed formula of *due process of law*, had in this manner attempted to defend and protect the principles of the bourgeois social and economic order as the higher order and the true constitution against the legislator." Carl Schmitt, *Der Hüter der Verfassung* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1931), p. 14.

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Germany were self-evident."[12] But without a systematic examination of this subject, this quote, likewise, could be quite misleading.

Lietzmann exercises similar selectivity in using quotes and sources in his introduction to two of Schmitt's early postwar articles on the Bonn constitution. The result is an unreliable and distorted framework for understanding or evaluating these works, which originally appeared anonymously and are now republished as an appendix.[13] These articles, written in a matter-of-fact analytical style, show not only Schmitt's acceptance of the new democratic constitutional order but the continuity with his Weimar political and legal writings broken during the Nazi era. To Lietzmann, though, they represent the "occasionalist," "opportunistic" Schmitt at work. But this is no mere reiteration of the traditional charge of personal opportunism due to ambition or lack of character; nor is it another rendition of Schmitt as nihilist theme. Schmitt appears rather as a tactical opportunist with an enduring, predetermined purpose, whose collaboration with the Third Reich did not constitute a "break" between his works in Weimar and the Federal Republic, but only an adaptation. Supposedly, Schmitt would manipulate any regime (Weimar-Nazi-Bonn) in order to fulfill his immutable political and ideological goal — in Lietzmann's words,". . . authoritarian bourgeois domination without a legitimizing political subject: bourgeois domination *sans phrase*."

From essentially this same ideological framework, Dieter Haselbach examines the current Schmitt discussion in the US. An important part of his overall evaluation is that the Kennedy-Frankfurt School controversy and the *Telos* editions on Schmitt do not signify a widespread interest in, or receptiveness to, this thinker by American leftists. Furthermore, he contends any American attempt to look to Schmitt for assistance in overcoming the stagnation of leftist theory will only culminate, as he claims it has in European leftist circles, in heightened confusion. Although such points could be debated at some length, it is perhaps too soon to judge what trends, if any, are discernible on the American Left. In any event, Haselbach's real focus appears less the American Left than the Right.

Haselbach discovers the true "American Schmittians" among the "neo-conservatives" (i.e., "old-liberals" of the anti-pluralist, free-market capitalist variety). Through what he labels the "immunized de-nazification" of Schmitt these revisionist neo-conservative scholars supposedly seek to free Schmitt from the burdens of his tainted Nazi past so his ideas can serve ". . . as a means to protect domination against pluralism" in the US. According to Haselbach, Schmitt's reputation as a "crisis theorist" is what makes him so attractive to American neo-conservatives, who were traumatized by student protests, the collapse of Nixon's presidential authority, the loss of the Viet Nam War, and

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-15.

13. Dr. Haustein [Carl Schmitt] "*Gegenwartsfragen der Verfassung*," and "*Das Grundgesetz der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*,"in *Schmitt und die Liberalismuskritik*, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-194.

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the insecurities of the Carter era. Thus Schmitt's analyses of Weimar's political and constitutional problems became ". . . a foil for criticizing the emancipation tendencies in American society." Schmitt was presented as a "star witness" for the neo-conservative political agenda and the "Reagan Revolution"; equally significant, his ideas offered simultaneously a defense of the liberal economic order based on capitalism and private property. Haselbach identifies the two neo-conservative scholars responsible for this transplanting of Schmitt from Germany to America for such ideological purposes as "Schwab and Bendersky."

Haselbach's thesis is constructed on false presuppositions, specious correlations, and factual errors about Schmitt scholarship in the US, combined with his own rather dogmatic framework and narrow assumptions about Schmitt, German history, and the proper way to approach these subjects.[14] Implicit in his argumentation is that the alleged ideological and political biases of such writers as Schwab and myself discredits their scholarship. To some extent, Haselbach's misunderstandings apparently stem from the similarities in interpretations between Schwab and myself, reinforced by a 1980 *Die Welt* report and subsequent letter to the editor.[15] These imputed that a

14. A variation of the Haselbach/Lietzmann interpretation can be found in Volker Gransow's and Wayne Miller's article on the US reception of Schmitt, where they also argue: Schmitt sought to free "ruling economic interests" from the constraints of parliamentary democracy; his thought is inherently opportunistic but nonetheless (like Heidegger and Paul de Man) his compromises with Nazism do not necessarily constitute a "break" with his earlier ideas; and there exists a definite relation between the recent American interest in Schmitt and the Reagan era that also suggests similarities between Weimar conservatism and American neo-conservatism. Studies which do not cast Schmitt in this mold Gransow and Miller label as "apologetic," whereas they have no difficulty accepting the statements of Schmitt's contemporary opponents in the 1930's (e.g., Karl Löwith) as gospel truth requiring no critical assessment to determine their credibility as evidence.

This is thus another ahistorical, distorted picture painted by selectivity, misquoting, and especially neglect of context, again demonstrating the possibility of creating any image of Schmitt one desires by linking together quotes and ideas from the Weimar, Nazi, and postwar years. Schmitt's scepticism whether universal peace could realistically be achieved in a complex pluriverse is transformed into his "fear of real world peace," supposedly because "a peaceful world would make Schmitt's [friend-enemy] thesis meaningless." More telling of these authors' ideologically-constraining predilections is that, after severely criticizing the treatment of Schmitt in *Telos* 72 (Summer 1987), they urge, among other things, serious consideration be given to Sombart's pseudo-psychoanalytical interpretations of "masculine fantasies in political theory" and whether "Schmitt was a representative of an extreme patriarchal form of thought or attempted to integrate the feminine into his theoretical structure." See Volker Gransow and Wayne Miller, "Carl Schmitt: Feind oder Fundgabe? Zur neueren Rezeption in den USA," forthcoming in *Das Argument*.

15. See Gottfried Dietze, "Amerika diskutiert das Werk von Carl Schmitt," *Die Welt*, (September 19, 1980), and Richard L. Merritt's letter to the editor of *Die Welt*, (October 13, 1980).

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panel on Schmitt at the American Political Science Association annual meeting was basically a conservative affair. From such sources it was inaccurately inferred that Schwab and I were linked by conservatism (and that I was his student), which conveniently fitted Haselbach's perception of the relation of Schmitt to American neo-conservatism. Perhaps it appeared inconceivable that scholars of differing political or ideological perspectives could, through the critical scholarly evaluation of documentation, arrive at similar conclusions. Whatever his sources, Haselbach's misconceptions are serious enough to warrant further comment.

A neo-conservative Schmittian school of thought simply does not exist in the US. Those writers the informed public would probably identify as neo-conservatives have most likely never heard of Schmitt. Moreover, one of the most distinguishing characteristics of the Americans who have displayed an interest in Schmitt is their diversity, a point I made categorically clear at the Speyer conference on Schmitt, and subsequently was reflected throughout Schwab's essay regarding Schmitt studies in the English-speaking world.[16]

Although Schwab is an intellectual advocate of a conservative American foreign policy, Haselbach's central arguments about a bourgeois economic order and anti-pluralistic objectives do not necessarily follow from this. Schwab belongs to the Hans Morgenthau school of political realism in international relations, founded upon power politics in the pursuit of national interest. In articulating his position, Schwab often borrows terminology and conceptual frameworks from Schmitt, as did Morgenthau, but he does not employ a similar mode of analysis to promote any anti-pluralist neo-conservative domestic agenda. The distinctive features in Schwab's work are an emphasis on executive power in foreign policy decision-making, and a hardline, almost intransigent, stance against the Soviet Union. As a philosophical principle underlying both foreign and domestic policy, Schwab has more recently promoted the concept of the "open-society" in which "pluralism" is accentuated as an essential value and integral characteristic.[17]

Neither is Schwab's book a piece of neo-conservative scholarship or merely an effort to "de-nazify" Schmitt, as Haselbach contends.[18] Started in the 1950s, it

16. See my comments at the Speyer conference, Schwab's reply, and his paper, "Progress of Schmitt Studies in the English-Speaking World," in *Complexio Oppositorum: Über Carl Schmitt*. ed. by Helmut Quaritsch (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1988), pp. 447-461.

17. Regarding the "open society" block, Schwab wrote: "The heart of the thesis can be encapsulated in the following propositions: Because open-society countries — those committed to the values and the practice of political, cultural, and religious pluralism — are existentially challenged by the Soviet Union, they share by definition certain foreign policy goals." See: "A Decade of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy," in *Power and Policy in Transition* (Westport: Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984), pp. 1-10. See also, George Schwab, "Toward an Open-Society Bloc," in *United States Foreign Policy at the Crossroads*, ed. George Schwab (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982), pp. 55-63.

18. George Schwab, *The Challenge of the Exception: An Introduction to the Political Ideas of Carl Schmitt between 1921 and 1936* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1970).

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was a truly "pioneering" work by a student who dared to take a detached scholarly approach to Schmitt, against whom there existed tremendous hostility in intellectual circles, further legitimized by gross distortions in the historical literature of that period. Schwab's work provided one of the clearest, most balanced, and accurate introductory explications of Schmitt's ideas available. Although it presented an undistorted rendition of Schmitt's ideas, and also recognized merit in several of Schmitt's major arguments, this book was not an apologia; nor did it, as Haselbach asserts, constitute merely an uncritical reflection of Schmitt's own self-interpretation. Schwab never hesitated to challenge or harshly criticize Schmitt's ideas, goals, or politics. In fact, the two American dissertations written subsequently on Schmitt at Brandeis University and the New School for Social Research never achieved the scholarly importance of *The Challenge of the Exception*.[19] Schwab's book has its deficiencies, but these cannot be attributed to the political motives Haselbach claims to have uncovered. After almost 20 years, it still stands as a major introduction to Schmitt's ideas.

Haselbach's association of me with neo-conservatism borders on the ludicrous; it certainly would amuse my colleagues and students. Answered briefly — and reluctantly — in the absence of a preferred social democratic alternative in the US, I actually worked in those very same McGovern and Carter presidential campaigns, actively supporting to this day the very pluralistic emancipation movements, which, according to Haselbach, supposedly created the cultural malaise and anxieties that accounts for my alleged neo-conservative political reaction and my attraction to Schmitt. And I remain categorically opposed to (actually appalled by) the conservative ideological milieu, socio-economic agenda, and foreign policy of the Reagan era Haselbach claims I represent.

More to the point, I am neither a student of Schwab nor a Schmittian. My work originated independently on the recommendation of a mentor while I studied in the mid-west, and my initial approach was to examine Schmitt from the traditional perspective as an intellectual subverter of Weimar democracy and progenitor of National Socialism. After reading several of Schmitt's major Weimar works, the untenability of this interpretation became obvious to me. Since that time, other scholars have experienced a similar change of view after actually reading what Schmitt wrote. It was at that point in my research (1971) a colleague brought Schwab's book to my attention; it confirmed and elaborated what I had generally already concluded, thereafter serving as an invaluable guide at that stage of the development of Schmitt studies. I examined Schmitt in the same manner I had been trained as a historian to study any historical question or figure. However, owing to the very controversial nature of

19. See unpublished dissertations by Paul Bookbinder, *From the Other Judge to the Other German: Carl Schmitt, 1910-1936*, Brandeis University (June 1971); and Jon Moulton, *Carl Schmitt's Theory of International Law and Relations*, The New School for Social Research (June 1968).

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this subject, I was particularly conscientious about what could be, and what actually had not been, substantiated through the critical assessment of available evidence. My own interpretation emerged as I uncovered a substantial amount of new published primary documentation and unpublished archival sources. Among other things, this research supported the broad outlines of Schwab's arguments, but also differed on such contentious points as Schmitt's objectives for the presidential system at the end of Weimar and certain reasons for his compromises with the Nazi regime.

While Haselbach acknowledges the importance of the extensive new documentation on which my interpretation was constructed, he argues nonetheless that in using it I failed to recognize the crucial point — the relation between "law and domination" implicit in Schmitt's thought. According to Haselbach, Schmitt considered authoritarian powers, and even National Socialism, not as the suspension of the "bourgeois *Rechtsstaat* but as a logical means for the continuation of this state in a crisis." The key concept in understanding Schmitt is, for Haselbach, "bourgeois domination *sans phrase*." Yet this thesis has never been developed or substantiated on the basis of documentation. How one can assert such positions without a detailed discussion, supported by evidence, is obviously quite problematical. The one place Haselbach directly addresses specific evidence is to charge that my interpretation of Schmitt and Nazism rests solely on documentation consisting of "Schmitt's own [*ex post facto*] self-interpretation." Here he cites only the Nuremberg interrogations and written disquisitions of Schmitt recently published in *Telos*.[20] A reading of my book would demonstrate, however, that I did not accept Schmitt's postwar explanations at face value and that I used such information only when its credibility could be established through other corroborating sources: among these are what we know from studies of the ideological foundations and decision-making apparatus of Nazi Germany, as well as what Schmitt actually stated *earlier* in his Weimar and Nazi writings. But more significant for this contentious point, there exists an abundance of corroborating primary documentation from published and archival sources, including the secret file on Schmitt compiled by the SS Security Service in 1936.[21]

This general critique of Haselbach should not be miscontrued as a denial that certain American conservatives have seized upon Schmitt for their own purposes, or that there exist no dangers in this. Such misuses can create problems and lead to serious new misconceptions about Schmitt and those studying his politics and thought. For example, Guy Oakes, in his introduction to the recent English translation of Schmitt's *Political Romanticism*, marred an otherwise generally credible scholarly discussion of a classic text by stretching its relation to fit

20. See Joseph W. Bendersky, "Carl Schmitt at Nuremberg," *Telos*, No. 72 (Summer 1987), pp. 91-129.

21. See Bendersky, *Carl Schmitt*. *op. cit*., especially the footnotes between pages 196 and 273; and references to primary sources in the bibliography.

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his personal views on the American political and cultural scene.[22] Gottfried Dietze, a native German and currently a professor of government at Johns Hopkins University, has probably been correctly identified by Haselbach as one who has imposed Schmittian ideas in advancing a conservative interpretation of a contemporary America in the midst of crisis.[23] Just such a personal interpretation by Dietze in his 1980 *Die Welt* article led to the inaccurate conclusion that the Schmitt panel at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association in Washington, D.C. (August 28-31, 1980) was a gathering of conservatives. The truth of the matter is that, while Schwab, who served as moderator, might be classified as conservative in the above-described mode, those who delivered papers (Bendersky, Kennedy, Ulmen) remain beyond the pale of a conservative ideological association.[24]

On the other hand, it would be a mistake to exaggerate the degree of a Schmitt-American-conservative relation that is probably quite limited. The *Telos* editions on Schmitt constitute more extensive treatment of Schmitt than most of what has been written by American conservatives put together. All signs are that Schmitt studies in the English-speaking world will retain their rich diversity. The 1987 panel on Schmitt at the American Historical Association annual meeting in Washington, D.C. (December 27-30) was thus indicative.[25] These participants represented various critical attitudes and approaches to Schmitt, but no conservative perspective. One could also cite Keith Tribes' recent work on Otto Kirchheimer and Franz Neumann, which again showed the relation between Schmitt's ideas and those of these prominent leftist intellectuals.[26]

Differing interpretations of a thinker of Schmitt's prolificacy, intellectual renown, contentious ideas, and controversial past are to be expected; these can

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22. See the introduction to Schmitt's *Political Romanticism*, trans. by Guy Oakes (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986), pp. xxvi-xxxi.

23. See Gottfried Dietze, "Rights, Riots, Crimes: On an Aspect of Carl Schmitt's Relevance for Today's Liberal Democracies," *Revue Européenne des Sciences Sociales*, XVI, No. 44 (1978), pp. 77-122.

24. The papers presented were: Joseph W. Bendersky, "Changing Intellectual Perspectives on Carl Schmitt: Weimar to the Present"; Ellen Kennedy, "Carl Schmitt on Liberalism and the Total State: Weimar as Example and Prologue"; and G. L. Ulmen, "Carl Schmitt: The Modern Equivalent of Hobbes."

25. This panel was entitled "Defender or Destroyer? Carl Schmitt's Constitutional Theory and the Weimar Republic," with papers by Joseph W. Bendersky, "Controversy and Evidence: Carl Schmitt and the End of Weimar" (Virginia Commonwealth University); Ellen Kennedy, "A Democratic Dictatorship? Intention and Consequences of Carl Schmitt's Constitutional Theory" (University of York); the commentaries were by Jane Caplan (Bryn Mawr College) and Michael Geyer (University of Chicago).

26. See Keith Tribe, ed., *Social Democracy and the Rule of Law: Otto Kirchheimer and Franz Neumann* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987). Moreover, the first issue of *The Journal of Theoretical Politics* has featured a very critical article on Schmitt's concept of the political by Giovanni Sartori, "The Essence of the Political in Carl Schmitt," Vol. I, Nr. 1 (January 1989), pp. 63-75.

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make definite contributions to our knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways. Challenging, forceful critical debates among informed writers in this field, like new methodologies and theories, are just as necessary and beneficial. The organizers of the Schmitt symposium at the Theodor Heuss Academy deserve praise for actually following in practice the very essential liberal principle of open discussion by providing a forum for the airing of radically divergent arguments. More conferences of this kind should be strongly encouraged. That certain of the papers reflect little of the liberal ideal of persuasion through sound argumentation and evidence is, indeed, unfortunate. Several also illustrate an occasionalist tendency to ignore or deviate significantly from the evidence in pursuit of a particular interpretation or use of Schmitt. Since this latter trend appears to be developing in incalculable directions, a word of caution, taken appropriately from Schmitt himself, might be in order. The occasionalist romantics of the 19th century, he noted, through their imaginative, subjectivist approach to reality, claimed to discover deeper meanings in objects and events that eluded those who derived their conclusions solely from logical or factual investigations. "Or, to employ a simile from Malebranche, just as children hear everything that is supposed to have been said in the ringing of bells, whereas the bells have said nothing, but have only chimed."[27]

Joseph W. Bendersky

27. Schmitt, *Political Romanticism*, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

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